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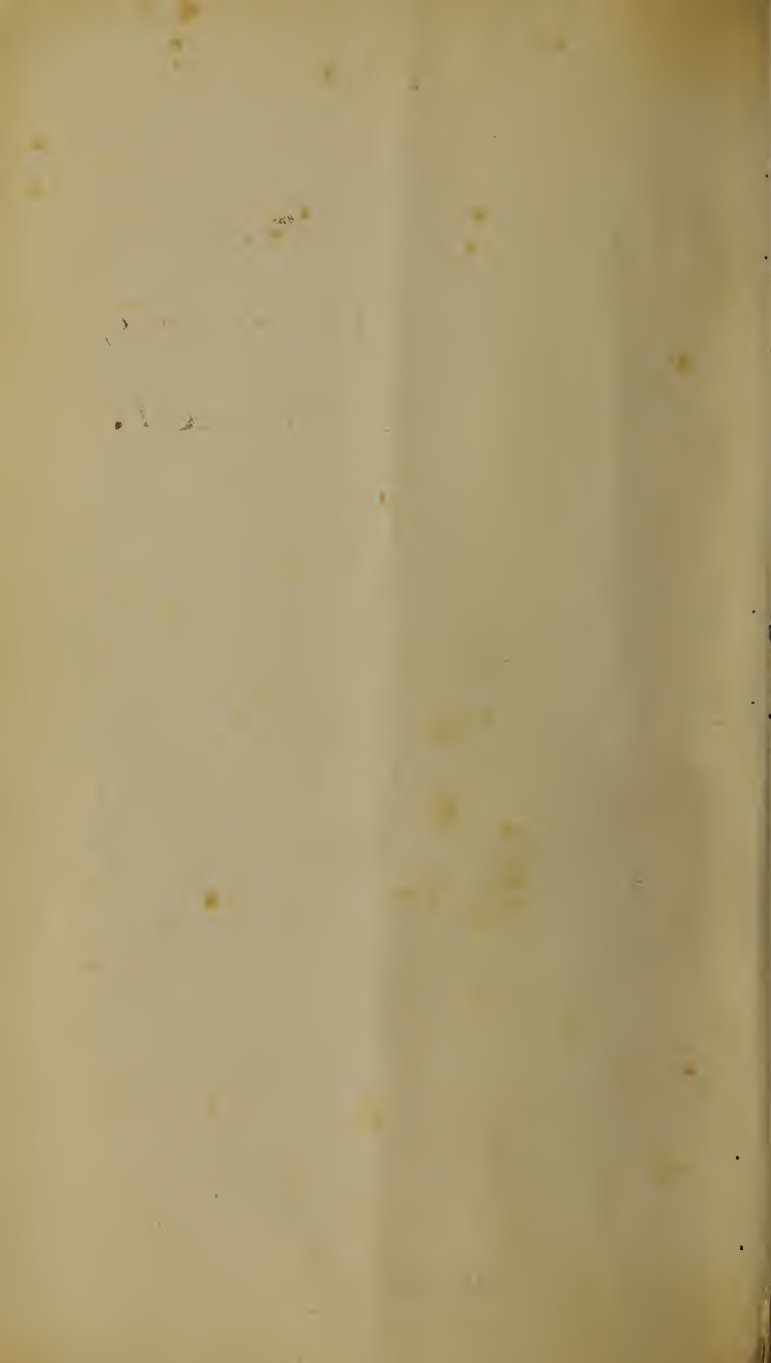
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The Greenwood Press







vol 5 464  
THE

# BACKWOODS' LIFE.

BY

W. F. MUNRO.

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"Nothing I have ever read presents backwoods' life more vividly and truthfully."—Dr. ORMISTON.

"To its positive literary merit, it adds the other great recommendation, in my eyes, of neither aggerating the inducements nor the obstacles in the Canadian settler's way."—THOS. D'ARCY MCGEE.

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By Permission,

I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE BOOK,

WHICH ATTEMPTS TO PORTRAY THE HUMBLE LIFE AND  
LABOUR OF THE IMMIGRANT AND THE SETTLER,

To His Excellency

THE HON. WM. PEARCE HOWLAND, C.B.,

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR OF ONTARIO,

ONE OF THE PIONEERS OF THE BACKWOODS OF CANADA.

The Author.

1870

1871

1872

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## PREFACE.

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A foolish dread of the unknown life of the Emigrant beyond the sea, not unseldom interferes with the poor man's resolution to give it a trial. The timid shrink from change, and would be assured, if possible, as to their lot under new and untried conditions. To such, the fact may be made known that Canada is very rich in resources, and has many attractions for the immigrant and the settler, but it is doubtful if such information would sooner help to a decision than that which tended to familiarize the mind with the ways of the country ; which made known the details, the ups and downs of the settler's everyday life, and showed how others, more forward, had begun and carried on the struggle for a home and a hundred acres in the Land of Freedom and Plenty.

Convinced of the utility of disseminating *such* simple information, I venture to proffer what is contained in the following pages,—a very insignificant quota no doubt, in the hope that others, following in the same direction, may do more and better.

W. F. M.

TORONTO, *August*, 1869.



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# THE BACKWOODS' LIFE.

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## CHAPTER I.

"FORTY OR FIFTY YEARS AGO."

Forty or fifty years ago few settlers had pierced the forest of what may be called the Peninsula of Western Canada, now part of the new Province of Ontario, to any considerable depth north of the two lowest of the Great Lakes, whilst along the shores of Lake Huron and the Georgian Bay, scarcely an opening had been made; the great interior still slumbered in the gloom of its ancient solitude, a wilderness of pine, and maple—primeval haunt of the deer, the Red Indian, the wolf, and the bear.

What is now the thriving settlement of Corning's Mills, far to the north and west of Toronto, was at this early period, known only from its beaver-dams to a few adventurous trappers, "native burghers of the wood," who, in pursuit of the mink and beaver along the creeks and rivers, were in reality the first white pioneers of the Canadian woods, although, as in the case of the aboriginal wanderers—the mysterious tribes of the forest, with whom they often frequented, and whose mode of life they partly adopted, nearly all of them have passed away and been forgotten.

One of the nomads of this early hunting period, Elijah Corning by name, whose Indian tastes led him to adopt the wandering life of a hunter and trapper, on the streams and lakelets of the interior, was the first to settle down in the remote region, now called after his name.

His idea was to become the founder of a great inland settlement. With a few kindred spirits to begin with, inducements should be held out to others to join in the adventure, for such it must have been in those days; a grist and saw mill were to be put up as



soon as practicable, and with the requisite number of settlers they would become a municipality. There would be a village no doubt the village would grow into a county town, perhaps into a city for with luck, management and a good location the like, or very near it, had happened before: meanwhile, until the produce of their clearings was available for their support, and as often afterwards as they had a mind, they might turn to the hook and line the rifle and the steel trap, for the bass and speckled trout were abundant in the rivers, the beaver had not yet disappeared, the mink, the otter, and the muskrat still haunted the lakes and streams, and still in prodigious numbers the lordly deer

“Arched his neck from glades, and then  
Unhunted sought his woods and wilderness again.”

or if more exciting sport were desired the grey wolf and the black bear might be tracked to their coverts in the swamp.

The spot selected by the old trapper for his hunting and pioneering experiment was, in his estimation no doubt, well adapted for the purpose. Northward stretched for many miles an expanse of as fine rolling hardwood land, as could be met with anywhere in the Province. Eastward the country abruptly descended, opening up into a valley of enormous dimensions affording an illimitable vista of dark woods as a relief to the monotony of the dull level. To the west, vast beaver-meadows, swales, and cedar swamps, formed the head waters of several important streams. A prevailing feature of the country southward was the frequent occurrence of spring creeks and small lakes, prolific in fish, and future mill sites.

Here, then, forty miles and more in advance of the very outskirts of the front settlements, with a belt of pathless woods between, over which the great immigration tide was only slowly rising, did our pioneer, with a few others whom he prevailed upon to share his fortunes, commence to build up an estate.

There is a beautiful fable of early pioneer life on the Susquehanna, by the poet Campbell, but attempting the delineation of a phase of life altogether foreign to his experience he makes the same dramatic mistake as appears in the *Endymion* of John Keats,

“It was beneath thy skies that put to prune  
His autumn fruits, or skim the light canoe,  
Perchance along thy river calm at noon,  
The happy shepherd swain had naught to do ! !”

“Delightful Wyoming,” sure enough !



The muse of Longfellow, truer to nature, breathes the genuine aroma of the woods, the dark stream, and the hidden lake, with all the forms of prolific life and savage loveliness therein, but the "forest primeval" of the poet, with its "murmuring pines, and hemlocks bearded with moss, indistinct in the twilight," is not the home of the immigrant and the settler.

In fact it won't do to go to the poets for the truth about the backwoods of Canada. No fiction of forest life, from the day of Arcadian Pan downwards, is at all like the reality—scenes devoid of human association, and tradition, where Nature's mystery is forgotten in the hard struggle to convert her wild haunts into real estate, under a patent from the British Crown. This is all the poetry of bush life as yet conceivable—a *home for the poor man, with peace and plenty to fill it.*

Instances in which this ideal of Canadian romance has been realized, forming part of the writer's own experience and personal observation, and more adapted to be of service to emigrants of the present day will be given, but the experience of Elijah Corning, an oft repeated tale by the pleasant fireside of one who shared it from the beginning, must not be omitted, for therein will at least be found a word of useful warning.

It was in the early part of the summer of 18— that our pioneer set out to take possession of the tract of land which he had obtained as a government grant on condition of permanent settlement, and certain specific improvements to be made, the principal part of which consisted in the putting up of a grist and saw mill on one of the streams, and the clearing of a certain number of acres in a given time. Four or five others, bound in the same way as to clearing, undertook to go with him. They were all married men with families, but these were to remain with their relations until the following summer, when it was expected they would have houses or at least shanties ready for their reception.

Corning and one or two of the others were not without means, and took with them a considerable stock of provisions, tools and other necessities in two old lumber waggons, each drawn by a yoke of oxen.

The old trapper knew the road well, for long familiarity with the woods had given him some of the Indian's unerring instinct of locality, but with the loaded teams many a long roundabout, to avoid the gullies and swamps, had to be made ere they arrived at their destination, so that more than a week was occupied in the journey. At night, they halted in some convenient spot, and slept

in the waggon, first kindling large fires, and turning the oxen loose with bells on their necks, to browse on the ground hemlock; and maple saplings.

Arrived in safety at their destination, their first efforts were directed to the clearing of a small patch for potatoes and Indian corn—not yet too late for such crops—which would come in so handy in the fall, when they would all be tired of the hard hunter's fare. In a week or ten days they had nearly an acre cleared, fenced and in crop. This was on Corning's property, and while they were all to share in the proceeds, he was to pay back in labor to each the time given to this, their first work done in the new settlement, about the hardest they ever did in it, for the timber and brush, not having time to season, were not in a condition to be treated as in ordinary cases, but had all to be moved off.

They now went more systematically to work and put up a good sized log shanty near the little clearing; the roof consisted of elm bark, and the floor of hemlock slabs, obtained by splitting up the logs with wedges, and levelling them with the broad axe. Here they were all to live in common till the following spring.

By this time each one had fixed upon a lot for himself, and looking at the selections made, we now see that our pioneers were either very poor judges of good land, or had an eye to something else than profitable farming. Corning himself had the roughest lot in the whole settlement, but no doubt he prized it on account of its water-privileges. Another of the pioneers chose a very beautiful level lot, the recommendations to which being its close proximity to an almost interminable swamp, where the hidden snows of winter often lingered into June, nipping the wheat in the blade. In fact very few of these first clearings are now of much value for farming purposes.

By special agreement with Corning the other pioneers were to receive cash, or its equivalent, either in labor or material in return for their assistance at the work of clearing the mill sites, building the dam and cutting the race, involving considerable labor, although, from the favourable situation and nature of the ground, it happened to be less than was expected. The part of the stream selected for the site was at the bottom of a series of rapids where the channel, for a hundred yards or so, became wide and perfectly level, composed, as in the case of the entire basin and bed of the stream, so far as it was known, of a species of shaly limestone, from the tilted portions of which, it was an easy matter to obtain,

with the assistance of the wedge and the crowbar, any quantity of material for the foundation. A day or two's chopping sufficed to take down all the trees necessary to be removed in order to proceed with the dam and the mill race. Immediately above the rapids the stream narrowed to the width of a few feet, and a little further up occurred one of the numerous beaver-meadows admirably adapted for holding water, which was indeed their original and legitimate function, but having been abandoned, and the water-works getting out of repair, they were left high and dry for grass to grow on, a god-send to the early settler till he can raise his own timothy. It was here at the narrowest part of the channel that the dam was built. The race, which required to be about a hundred yards in length, was dug out of the face of the hill on the right bank, and owing to the roots and gravelly nature of the ground, was the hardest work of all. The next operation was to get the frames, both of the grist and saw-mills, in readiness for raising. These consisted entirely of cedar, of which an abundance could be had in the swamps. It is a very durable wood, and on account of its lightness well adapted for all building purposes, especially when only four or five hands can be had for the raising. In this case the logs were all squared with the axe, the lowest, including the sills, being the heaviest that could be obtained, rested on a foundation of limestone slabs, right in the level bed of the river—no fear of freshets carrying the whole thing down stream, for it was only a little way to the parent lake, and neither heavy rain nor sudden thaw could make much difference upon it.

It was a source of great satisfaction to our pioneers when they had finished their raising, for it seemed like the accomplishment of their object. Here, for the present, however, the mill operations would have to cease to afford to each the time necessary to push forward the clearing of a few acres for crop the following spring. At odd times, when not working for Corning at the mills, they had all been doing a little on their own lots; one had about two acres chopped, the rest about one, which they now set themselves to burn and clear up for fall wheat, usually sown in September. They all worked together at the logging, going from one lot to the other, until the whole was completed. Their fall and winter chopping would have to lie over till the spring, when, if the season was at all favourable, more clearing up might be accomplished in time for later sowing. On finishing their day's work they returned to their common quarters in the shanty, where one of the number, in regular rotation, had taken his turn



as cook, preceding the others an hour or two to attend to the duty of providing supper, as well as breakfast and luncheon for the following day. It was seldom they wanted venison, for none of them went out without his rifle and the deer were always about. Once or twice they caught a bear in a primitive sort of trap made of a frame of stout logs, baited with the viscera of a deer, so placed that when pulled at by the bear, the top fell down, and poor bruin was a prisoner without reprieve, unless he was strong enough to break his prison, as he has been known to do; his chances were small, however, and the first that came along sent a bullet through his ear. This was rare sport and brought good cheer, and a valuable skin to the shanty. Then there was always at hand a plentiful supply of fish, which, with tea and bread baked in the camp oven, furnished a rough but wholesome meal to men unaccustomed to the refinements of cookery.

They had brought five or six barrels of flour with them, but before entering upon their winter campaign they would require a further supply of this as well as other necessities, particularly pork, for which some of them would have to go to the front while the roads were passable. Corning, who also wanted lots of things for the mills, and to make some arrangement with a millwright to put up the machinery in the spring, decided to go himself, with another of the men, taking both waggons. The journey out through the late October woods gleaming with gold and crimson was pleasant, and did not occupy more than three or four days; but the return was attended with much hardship and suffering—the days were short, and there had been a heavy fall of snow; it was well for our pioneers that they were hardy, patient men, accustomed to camping out, and protecting themselves from cold and the attack of savage beasts. At length, however, they reached the shanty, which, during their absence, had been put in some better trim for winter. The chinks between the logs having at the time of the raising been merely wedged with blocks of cedar were now carefully stuffed with moss and plastered with a fine blue clay which happened to be at hand. They had also added a chimney with a stone base and hearth of sufficient capacity to take in logs of four or five feet, of which, in the cold weather there would be no stint in such a wooden country.

The regular work of the winter now commenced. Besides chopping, each on his own lot, or in pairs, day about, they cut a road from the mills to the furthest away clearing, which they hoped would some day be a concession line along the front of the lots

they had taken up. They also got the logs hauled together to where each was to have his house, and made them all ready for raising. Thus they continued until the snow became so deep that they could not conveniently attend to such work; they then betook themselves to hunting. The principal game was the deer, which they followed on snow shoes, going against the wind until chance gave them a shot. They had many a long tramp for nothing, but after all got far more venison than they could use. Corning had a way of tanning the skins soft and white, which made them valuable, and they managed to get a good many of them this winter.

The Canadian deer is a very graceful animal, differing little in appearance from the famous European Stag. His colour varies with the season, being of a reddish brown in the Spring, of a slaty hue in Summer, and dull brown in Winter. The belly, throat, and inner face of the legs and tail are white. The buck only has horns—two small pointed ones the first year, but each succeeding year adds a branch, until complete ramification is attained, the antlers are shed every year and renewed again in the Spring.

Other game they took in considerable numbers—chiefly in traps at this season. These were caught principally for their skins, although some of them, as the porcupine and muskrat made very good eating. One or two small colonies of beavers, convenient to the settlement, were rooted out entirely. Muskrats were very plentiful; they form a sort of connecting link between the beaver and the water-rat, deriving their name from the strong odour of musk which they emit and which the skin retains for a long time. The body of this animal measures from ten to twelve inches, and the tail, which is somewhat flattened, and covered with rounded scales mixed with whitish hairs, measures seven or eight inches. The colour of the back is dark brown, shading to red on the neck, ribs, and legs, and to ashy grey on the belly. It lives on the banks of rivers and lakes where it constructs a series of winding passages or tunnels, opening from under the water, and sloping upwards to a single chamber, where the nest is built. It is a very neek, inoffensive creature, and although armed with formidable teeth of the rodent kind, makes very little resistance when captured.

Another animal, which was rather abundant in and around the settlement, was the porcupine, belonging to the family remarkable for the occurrence of sharp horny spines intermixed with the fur, which of itself is a dark brown, but mixed with a sprinkling of whitish hairs, and the spines being also white, the animal has a

greyish appearance. The body measures from twenty to thirty inches, and the tail about six. It has a round arched back, short legs, a small head and invisible ears. The spines commence on the head, where they are thickly set sharp and rigid, increasing in length and flexibility towards the hind quarters, where they again get numerous and sharp. The tail is armed in a similar manner. It lives in the hollows of trees feeding principally on the bark. It is also a very mild and harmless animal, although capable of inflicting severe pain upon any creature that attacks it. Its only modes of defence is to strike a pretty sharp blow with the tail, which always leaves in the mouth or skin of its assailant some of its spines, and these being barbed with the points downwards to the base every movement sends them further in, till sometimes they reach and pierce a vital part. Those who have the cruelty to send dogs after these animals have to be careful to extract the spines from the mouth and skin.

But the most valuable animals were the mink or martin and the otter, of which the streams in and around the new settlement afforded a good many. The mink is an animal almost exactly like the ferret, except in size and colour. The fur is brown and now much sought after, coming next to the sable, which it somewhat resembles. It is a water-loving animal, frequenting the banks of still lakes, marshes and rivers, where it feeds on fish, frogs and aquatic insects; its feet are slightly webbed so that it is a good swimmer.

The Canadian otter is much larger than the European species, measuring about forty inches from the nose to tip of the tail. He lives almost entirely on fish, and is very particular in his selections. Having often to change his quarters in winter, when they get frozen up, he is sometimes caught on an emigration tour, but it requires expertness with the snow shoes to get near him, for he takes to diving in the snow in the same way as he does in the water. He is said to be remarkable also for the school-boy trick of sliding down slopes as a sort of pastime, with which the steel traps cruelly interfere sometimes. The fur is of a shiny brown and very durable.

Our pioneers, between hunting, shingle-making, and attending to their cattle, having managed to put in the remainder of the winter, were now, as the snow began to wear away, in a position to attend to other matters. They went to work and hauled a quantity of saw logs to the mill so as to be in readiness for sawing, as the first thing required both for the grist mill and the houses of the settlers was lumber.

The next thing was the raising of the houses, performed with



much less ceremony, than usually attends this important operation, where there are lots of people together. In every case the logs, principally cedar, were cut and ready so that the putting up of the walls and rafters, cutting out the windows and doors, took up very little time. The spring had now fairly commenced, and the notes of the robin and blue bird sounded sweet in wold and wood. In confident anticipation of the mill being in operation before another winter, with the additional hope that summer would bring an accession of new settlers who would also be good customers for their flour, they now proceeded with the logging, clearing up and fencing of their winter's fallows, this with the subsequent sowing and planting of the same, kept them busy till the middle of June, when Corning, being now ready for the millwright, set out once more to the front with the waggons. This time, the roads being good, ten days sufficed for the journey in and out. The millwright and three or four new settlers came in along with the teams. Corning now applied himself exclusively to the fitting up of his mills, which he intended to run himself, having had some experience in that line, but it is unnecessary to follow him through their whole process, extending even to the manufacture of the greater part of the machinery, such as it was. Suffice it to say, that before harvest the saw mill was running, and sufficient lumber cut for the more pressing necessities of the settlement.

After attending to the beaver-meadow hay, and the harvest, Corning took the road again, this time to bring in the families, his own, and those of the other pioneers. Returning with these and a couple of new settlers, he found the grist mill running, and the settlement therefore an accomplished fact. The old trapper did his best to make known what he had done, even undertaking another journey to the front before the winter set in, with a sample of the wheat and flour of "Corning's Mill," as the place has ever since been called, in order to prove that it was a place, and that people could live in it; but somehow or other, notwithstanding all the colouring he was able to give it, people did not seem to be willing to undertake the risk of settling so far away in the woods. Forty or fifty miles away from the lakes was thought far enough to go in those days, and so it was, especially for the immigrant, who had not yet acquired the Indian relish for unbroken solitudes, nor learned the hunter's art of living contented therein. And thus it was that the now flourishing settlement of Corning's Mills remained for many a weary year a sort of *Ultima Thule* of backwood's life, having about as little to do with the lake-

board as the old out-post of Niagara, in far earlier times, had to do with the Atlantic sea-board settlements, when a broad belt of the fierce Iroquois still girdled the country between from the Richelieu to the Detroit.

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## CHAPTER II.

### A FRESH START.

Fifteen years' endeavour on the part of Elijah Corning, and his pioneers to make a great settlement out of what in their time was perhaps the most unfortunate location that could have been chosen, had resulted in the addition to the original number of only some ten or twelve families, of various nationalities, all very poor by this time, living in a primitive sort of way apart from the great world, and knowing little or nothing of its doings. The most of these, however, were men well adapted for such a life and probably could not have succeeded in any other; still there were a few, of whom, two or three were immigrants, led, they hardly knew how, to such a queer out-of-the-way place, who, from their former experience and mode of life, were ill adapted for "roughing it in the bush" after the fashion which had hitherto obtained in the settlement of Corning's Mills. Some of these, their patience worn out in vain anticipation of better times, had left altogether; their small clearings, with the deserted log shanty in the centre, remaining behind as a monument of wasted labour and final defeat.

In any settlement, however flourishing, there will always be some that are unlucky and shiftless, but here, where the whole thing had been a mistake from the beginning, they had all become more or less shiftless. Corning was now an old man, and his policy towards the few intending settlers that, from time to time made their appearance was becoming very stupid. When any new-comer wanted to get possession of what was considered a desirable lot of land, with perhaps a spring creek, a little cedar or pine, or



anything that was thought to enhance its value a little, the old trapper would probably give him to understand that somebody else had spoken for that particular lot, or, having direct control of the same, would ask an unreasonable price for it. The consequence was that the land lay uncleared, and the mills idle. But better times are at hand.

What first gave the place a start, was the opening up, by the Crown Lands Department, of some thirty or forty miles of a road which run past the settlement, some few miles to the west. The lots on both sides of this road were of one hundred acres, and, by what was considered in those days, a great stretch of legislative liberality, one half of each lot was offered as a free grant to actual settlers, with the privilege of purchasing the other half, the design being to encourage the sale and settlement of the extensive tracts of the public land still unoccupied in that quarter. The immediate result of this enterprising policy was, that a large number of visitors on the look out for land made their appearance in and around the settlement of Corning's Mills.

Unfortunately a good deal of the land along the new road was of a very poor quality—long stretches of tamarack swamp, alternating with sand banks and ridges of gravel. A great many poor ignorant settlers, after striving a year or two on the miserable lots they had taken up, spending their last cent in the vain hope of succeeding, were at length forced to give up. Some of them, however, with quite a number of others who did not avail themselves of the liberality of the government in the matter of the free grants, bought the Crown land that was for sale in the vicinity, and settled down.

It may here be remarked that a bee-line of road or railway, is proverbial in Canada for passing through the very worst parts of the country, and casual travellers, not taking the trouble to look round, see everything in an unfavourable light. The free grant district of Muskoka furnishes, at the present day, a very remarkable instance of this sort. The entrance to this flourishing part of the country encloses a portage of fourteen miles from the head of Lake Couchiching to Lake Muskoka, over a very miserable region, a real "Valley of Baca," to pass through which and hope for good beyond, must have exercised the faith and patience of not a few. The writer has travelled this road with those who no sooner got to the end of it, than they turned right back laughing at the credulity which believed in the existence of something better further on, and yet farther on, north, east and west, the

great tide of settlement is ever flowing, the district is one of the healthiest on the whole Continent, and the scenery of its lakes rivals that of the far-famed Loch Lomond.

In most of our new settlements of the present day, especially those where the free grant system prevails, the constant stream of settlers pouring in, along with the extensive lumbering operations generally going on, originate a demand for labour, a matter of the first importance to those who have no means, and who cannot afford to wait until the produce of their clearing becomes adequate to their support.

The free grant experiment on the line of road passing near Corning's Mills had a marked effect upon the old perfunctory settlement. Money, which in former years could only be raised by the sale of skins, or by labour in the harvest fields of the more advanced parts of the country, now began to circulate—the result of numerous small sub-contracts on the new road, and of the influx of new settlers, whose mouths had to be filled, and whose accession to the neighborhood was, at the same time, a welcome relief to a community so long excluded from the rest of the world.

One of the first institutions of a new country, undergoing anything like rapid settlement, is the tavern. The inference, however, is not that settlers as a class, are more addicted to the use of drink than others. The tavern in Canada, especially in the backwoods, still bears something of its old English signification—it is a place of hospitable entertainment for man and beast, and, as such, is one of the prime necessities of a new country, particularly in that season of the year when an hour's ride often reduces the caloric in the human system to a degree which renders the sight of a roaring fire, with a glass of "hot stuff" an almost indispensable condition of travelling. The man who has the courage to move into a new country in the course of settlement, taking with him a span of horses, or a yoke of oxen, with the material to set up a tavern—say some whiskey, brandy, flour and pork is considered a sort of a public benefactor, and if he keeps sober and minds his business there is no fear of his future. Let no one, therefore, judge rashly of the tavern, or imagine that the tavernkeeper is *ex officio* a publican and a sinner. Nor needs the traveller scruple to sit down to his meal, or lie down to rest, if it should only be on the soft side of a plank, he will find mine host do the fair thing by him; for he is generally a sturdy honest fellow, and has the credit of the settlement to maintain. But the backwoods tavern to do well must only be attempted where there is a steady current of

settlement, otherwise it does not pay, and dwindles into something very like a shebeen, to the injury of the whole place, as happened to some extent in the case of Corning's Mills. Here, the tavern had been early started. Joe Rogers, the proprietor, having moved in a year or two after Corning and his pioneers, and for a while, working manfully with the others, had succeeded in clearing some thirty or forty acres; but the stimulus of rapid settlement was wanting, and it never had the healthy and stirring appearance which in general preserves from temptation the host himself, as well as his neighbours. A good many had become confirmed toppers, and often "loafed around" the bar, when they ought to have been at work in the field or the fallow. But mine host of the "Wheat Sheaf Inn," a year or two previous to the opening up of the country as above mentioned, had sold out the whole thing, farm and tavern, to his next door neighbour for a waggon and span of horses, and gone, no one knew where. The purchaser had no intention of carrying on the business, but the new aspect of affairs enabled him to let the premises and part of the clearing, to a new man who very soon put things to rights.

The main reliance of the backwoods tavern is in lodging and assisting the new settler. A good span of horses will always be in request, and, with the hired man, will command from three to four dollars a day, and the settler is glad to get the help they afford. If there is flour and pork to be had within a reasonable distance, it will pay well to keep these necessities in stock; so that a shrewd careful man, willing as well as able, to turn his hand to anything that offers, is always sure to get plenty to do. In ordinary circumstances the custom of the place is derived from the passing traveller, who generally stops and waters if not feeds his horse. In winter, especially, when everybody travels, people are glad to stop a few minutes "to warm up" and have a glass of beer or "hot stuff" which, be it understood, is a concoction of warm water, ginger and sugar, with not unfrequently a little whiskey or brandy. Friend meets friend, and one takes his turn of treating the other, often asking all those present in the room to step up to the bar and partake of the treat. On accepting the invitation each one calls for what liquor he wishes, pours out his own glass, and drinks it standing at the bar or counter. The ladies are generally accommodated with a sitting room off the bar-room, where they have an opportunity of enjoying their treat unmolested.

The backwoods tavern is often the meeting place of the township council, which attracts those who have a taste for beer and



public business, those who have appeals to make against assessments, claims to prefer for settlement, plans to propose for the common weal. It is often a motley and noisy gathering, with but little outward manifestation of reverence for the assembled wisdom.

A fruitful source of revenue is derived from the annual elections of municipal officers—Reeves and Councilmen, Common School Trustees, and more rarely members of Parliament.

The prevalence of Orangeism in the backwoods is also in the interest of the tavern. The anniversaries of the "Twelfth" and the "Fifth" are usually celebrated by suppers and balls, at which there is always an abundant retail of "forty rod." Nor is the annual shooting matches to be overlooked. About Christmas, mine host has provided a whole flock of geese and turkeys, which are set up as marks for the rifle. Young people are rather fond of this sport, and on its account often spend more money and drink more bad whiskey than they ought to do.

Such is tavern-keeping in the backwoods. Let the immigrant have nothing to do with it until he is perfectly acquainted with the ways of the country, and then he is not worth much if he can't do better.

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## CHAPTER III.

### THE "WEE TAILOR."

Wherever there is a rush into a new settlement, some one will always be ready to turn it to account in the way of business. The opening up of the country to the west of "Corning's Mills" had been noted by an individual of the name of Small, an immigrant of two or three years standing, on the lookout for a place in which to try his fortune as a country merchant.

Mr. Small was a cockney tailor, a timid little creature, and one of the last men you would have expected to meet so far from home.

Weak in bodily presence, and in speech contemptible to the last degree, his voice never rising above a girlish squeak, there existed a strength in his natural acquisitiveness alone, which made him a match for the terrors of a wild and unsettled country. This careful little man had managed to hoard something like two hundred pounds before he left London, and on first coming to Canada, had obtained a third class certificate, and taken to Common School Teaching in some rural section on the outskirts of the front settlements, distant from Corning's Mills some fifty or sixty miles. Here he had saved his money and learned the ways of the country, so essential to success in the life he had laid out for himself.

It was in the early part of the Fall of the year that the "Apostle Paul," as the settlers learned to distinguish this interprising tailor and pioneer storekeeper, leaving his family provided for in the place where he had been last employed as a teacher, first made his appearance in the settlement, in the capacity of itinerant local preacher, ministering to his own necessities, in true apostolic fashion, by the labour of his hands and fingers, a welcome visitant to the homes of the settlers, with his needle and pleasant little ways. He belonged to the West End of London, and was great on "Society" and "Ide Park." No doubt the neighbourhood and companionship of brawny, belted and booted backwoodsmen, hairy as to the face, and in manners, gruff a little sometimes, were not what brother Paul would have preferred, but with other vicissitudes of fortune were endured with the most praiseworthy resignation. Not in the least degree boastful of any undue partiality for adventure, he had good reason to hope for immunity from fear of attack by any of the more savage animals, still numerous enough in the depths of that primeval forests; it is true he had been badly frightened more than once, but it was never known to this day, that anything more terrible than a turkey gobbler, ever thought of running away with the "wee tailor."

In a short time Mr. Small got acquainted with all the old settlers of Corning's Mills who were delighted at the prospect of his going to keep store beside them—a man of his experience in temporal and spiritual matters would be a decided acquisition to the settlement; so that when he fixed upon a lot, and was prepared to go on with his house, they turned out to a man and put it up for him, not only hauled the logs and raised them, but shingled the roof and laid the floor, all the cost being the shingles, the lumber, and the nails. One half of the house, which measured twenty-five by twenty-four, was petitioned off as a store, with an

arrangement of shelves and a counter, the other half was divided into two apartments, which the family would have to put up with for a little as a dwelling. The inside work of both store and dwelling was done by one of the settlers, a sort of country carpenter, assisted by the tailor himself, the whole thing costing not over a hundred dollars. The stock arrived two or three weeks after the house was finished; with it came Mrs. Small and the two children, a cooking stove and several articles of household furniture.

Of foreign goods and merchandise, Upper and Lower Canada, using the old names, import annually to the value of ten or twelve millions of pounds sterling, the distribution and sale of which, by wholesale and retail, along with the products of native growth and manufacture, give rise to a prodigious amount of storekeeping one way and another. In the wholesale line, in spite of numerous transactions turning up on the debit of profit and loss, there has, of late years, been a large and profitable business done. New houses are continually starting into competition. Old ones are extending their connections, and in many instances enlarging their premises; but upon the whole, it is a question whether this department is not beginning to get a little overdone. In the retail branch, there is a very manifest overcrowding—hardly a little village in the whole country but has its three or four stores eagerly competing for business. It does not require a very great capital to begin with in some places, and credit is easy to obtain, hence, on the part of some who have unfortunately learned to despise the honest and manly profession which made their fathers independent, there is an unhealthy craving after mercantile pursuits. Many a foolish son has brought his old father to grief by a vain conceit that he was going to make a fortune as a merchant. Set up in business with the aid of a mortgage on the old homestead, everything goes on well for a time, but the stock runs down, and the money has not come in to renew it, more security is demanded on application for more goods, another mortgage has to be given—and so on, till farm and goods and all are gone. Bankruptcy is of rather frequent occurrence in the small retail line, but it is not thought so much of as at home, and is met with treatment of almost unexampled liberality. Under "The Insolvent Act of 1864, and amendments," a person, finding himself in insolvent circumstances, may make a voluntary assignment of his estate and effects. The assignee, who is an officer of the Court, appointed by the Board of Trade, immediately proceeds to realize upon the



assets, making a distribution among the creditors in proportion to their claims duly attested. Two months after the assignment a meeting of the creditors of the Insolvent, for his public examination under oath, and the ordering of the affairs of his estate, is held. At the end of other ten months, the Insolvent, not having obtained from the majority of his creditors representing three-fourths of his liabilities, a deed of consent to his discharge, or a deed of composition or discharge, may apply by petition to the Judge of the County Court of the county in which the proceedings are being taken, for a discharge, which is granted unless some opposing creditor can prove the existence of fraud in the case. The Insolvent has not much reason to quarrel with the provisions of this Act, but a good number of our wholesale men begin to think that it is rather too liberal.

But the backwoods storekeeper is at first hardly recognized as being "in the trade," or in a position on the books of the "Mercantile Agency," hence the preceding remarks on business and insolvency, apply less to his present circumstances, and those of the new settlement, than they would after some progress has been made. At first his stock will consist of the most ordinary staples. In the "dry goods" there will be no occasion to invest in West of England broadcloths, silks or satins. Strong factory cottons, drills, denims, cheap prints, Canadian tweeds, and woollens will be the most distinguishing features in this line. In the clothing department there will be an assortment of heavy Canadian grey overcoats and pantaloons, with some lighter tweeds for those who have not yet the resource of home manufacture, but wool-growing soon to be followed by the carding mill, will afford an abundance of good substantial home-spun, better than any shoddy stuff to be had at the store. In the line of "boots and shoes," the first stock will be limited in general to the variety "stoga," a boot reaching to the knee, and worn outside the pantaloons, of substantial cowhide, and thick sole, indispensable to the comfort of the neither extremities in the mud and slush of the spring and fall. In the dry fleecy snow of winter, however, the Indian moccassin is found to be the best covering for the feet, and any one with a little ingenuity can make them, not so neatly perhaps as the Indian himself, but quite as comfortable. The best material is buckskin, which may be tanned soft, and is very durable; made to fit like a stocking, the exercise of every part of the foot keeps it warm in the coldest weather.

In the hardware line, there will be lots of shingle and other nails,

a few of the more common tools, and if there is anything like fair hunting, a pretty good variety of steel traps, but the staple article will be the *axe*—which ought to have been our national emblem, everything depending upon its “heaved stroke.” It is a simple steel wedge of rather inelegant form, measuring about eight inches in length by from four and a half to five inches along the edge, narrowing to three inches towards the other end, where the handle is inserted, which is three feet long, it is sold by weight, which averages about five pounds.

In the grocery and provision line the staples will be at the first outset, flour, pork and tea. Until there is a grist mill in the settlement, the storekeeper may have to bring his flour a considerable distance, in which case he will require a team of his own, and it will have plenty to do to keep the stock up, if settlers are crowding in. Under ordinary circumstances, however, it will not be long till the settlement has a mill of its own, and then the miller himself will attend to the flour market stocking it with his own manufacture.

Pork will be in active demand until the settlers are in a position to raise their own stock. In winter, the genuine backwoods lumberman prefers his pork in the form which goes by the trade name of “heavy mess,” consisting of the shoulders, ribs, and flanks of the fattest and heaviest hogs, salted and put up in barrels, containing exactly two hundred pounds. The Montreal standard of inspection requires that there should be not more than sixteen pieces in a barrel, four shoulders, eight ribs, and four flanks. “Prime Mess” is another trade name, for an inferior description of barrel pork, put up in the same way as “mess” but not selected. The lumberer will live a whole winter on fat pork, bread, and green tea soup,—for it can be compared to nothing else, boiled for hours in a large pot and as black and bitter as gall, without either cream or sugar. This will hardly do for the ordinary settler, however. Pork in the shape of dry cured hams and sides will find more favour with him, as well as a cup of tea in the usual way, though very often minus the sugar.

Let me be understood as describing the most elementary condition of the trade—a very few years will make a difference, and the storekeeper will always know when to vary and extend the different lines in accommodation to the growing wants of the settlement. At first he will be able to command his own prices, but immoderate charges will soon induce competition, so that he had better be reasonable.



Our friend, Mr. Small was blamed for charging too high for his goods, but he either got what he asked or people did without. There were lots of travellers during the winter, settlers were also crowding in, the tavern was full all the time, so that the store had to be restocked more than once before Spring. Between tailoring, preaching and serving at the counter the little man had enough to do, but his heart was in the work and he devoted his whole energy to it. He was the very soul of order and neatness, and when one had money to spend it was pleasant to give him a call. His terms with new settlers and travellers were, of course, cash, so that he turned over quite a respectable sum of money during the winter. The same thing went on through the summer. Mr. Small was obliged to get a horse and waggon of his own, and made several trips to the wholesale market for goods, bringing the lighter part home with him and shipping the rest, by rail, to the nearest depot, from whence they were brought by teams belonging to the settlement, at so much per hundred weight.

Everything seemed to prosper with Mr. Small. There was no rent to pay, the taxes were only nominal; firewood cost no more than the trouble of cutting and hauling; butter and eggs were to be had to any amount in trade, and the strictest economy in house management being observed, the wee tailor could not help getting rich.

Without entering into details, the general result was that the little store expanded into a big one; Mrs. Small got a gold watch, the first that had been seen in the settlement; the girls, Lucy Jane and Mary Sophia, had to get a "pianer," which their accomplished little papa could both tune and play. Next came the light waggon, or "buggy," for summer, and the gayest of family cutters for winter use, and amusement. Meantime, unpaid store bills were growing into mortgages on the lands of improvident settlers, ultimately to grow into the land itself, and all within a period of ten years. So much, just now, for Mr. Small and the first store at Corning's Mills.

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## CHAPTER IV.

## A NEW PROPRIETOR.

The first store at Corning's Mills had long monopolized its trade ; you could not buy a pound of tea or a flannel shirt nearer than Appleville, one of those embryo villages sprouting up all over the country, thirty miles to the south ; but now with increased resources, and the steady influx of new settlers, came also competition in trade. Mr. Small was destined to encounter a rival.

A certain canny Scot, hailing from Aberdeen, had begun the New World on a farm in one of the front settlements, where he had made money, and "raised" a large family of fine smart boys, a stock said to depreciate in value a little after the land is all cleared up, but which is always at a premium in the backwoods—so useful is it there to have a lot of little willing hands to help putting in the potatoes, to pick up chips for the cooking stove, and the log heaps burning in the fallow, hunt eggs, mind a gap in harvest time, and look after the ducks and geese nights.

With a watchful Scotch eye to his own and his boys' future Mr. Perth had long been on the look out for a wider field in which to exercise his energies, and make suitable provision for the demands of an increasing and hopeful family. A farm for each of his sons was not so easy to be had in the old settlements, but quite possible in the back townships. He had heard of Corning's Mills, and the attempt of its founder to make it a great place, saw at once his mistake, and believing that he could work the concern, entered into negotiations with the old trapper for the purchase of the mill property. Mr. Corning was willing to sell, for he was now old and infirm, and most of his family had left him, still clinging to the hope of realizing his original idea, but from the absurdity of the thing itself, and the foolish means by which he endeavoured to carry it out, ever doomed to disappointment and defeat. Poor Corning had never been himself for more than fifteen years previous to this—one great calamity was always quoted, as accounting in some degree, for the failure of his scheme, as well as the numerous excentricities that marked his life and conduct. *Two favourite children, in company with two others belonging to dif-*

*ferent families, who had just settled in the vicinity of the mills, went away into the woods one evening to bring home the cattle, and never more returned.*

“Not that day nor the next, nor yet the day succeeded  
Found they trace of their course, in lake or forest or river.”

This terrible event cast a deep gloom over the whole settlement; the men did nothing for weeks but scour the woods in vain search for the lost little ones. They never were found.

“The Indians stole them off and away they did go  
Which sunk their loving parents in sorrow and woe.”

Two lines of a woeful ballad of indigenious production, which afford the only probable clue to the fate of the lost darlings.

Many heart-rending instances are on record of children, as well as grown up people, getting lost in the woods; but seldom has it happened, as in this case, that no trace of them could be found. The suspicion that they were kidnapped by the Indians was strengthened almost to conviction from the fact that Corning had quarrelled with some of them only a few weeks before, refusing to supply them with flour in exchange for venison which he did not want at the time. In these days, there is no fear of kidnapping but there is always more or less risk of finding one's self astray in the woods. By a kind of instinct the Indian detects in the appearance of the trees, the signs which are the same to him in his wanderings, that the Pole Star is to the navigator; but the white man takes long to learn them, and when he ventures beyond his bearings, the chances of finding his way out are considerably against him. Coming across some deer or cattle track he is tempted to follow it; if in daylight he travels on, facing the sun perhaps, which leads him in a circle, and lands him at nightfall exactly where he set out. The best thing he can do on finding himself astray, is quietly to sit down on the first log, and wait there. He will soon be missed, and his friends will hunt him up. Or if he hear a cow-bell, let him find the animal, and begin driving it, he will shortly be homeward bound. The best thing he can do, however, is not to go beyond his reckoning, which will always be getting wider, the longer he lives and travels in the bush.

A word or two as to the mills and the mill property now in the hands of Mr. Perth. It is not unusual to speak of a grist mill in the plural, but here, as we have seen, there were both a grist and saw mill, and both on the same stream. Long ago Corning and his men had laid the foundations of solid cedar, right in



the bed of the river, but constant exposure to the action of water was beginning to tell upon them; whilst the machinery, put up at first more with the view to immediate use than durability, and now having had more than a quarter of a century's noisy and dusty existence, it was no wonder that it had a queer rickety way of proclaiming the service it did for people. But no apology was felt to be necessary in speaking of the water-power. However much Mr. Perth might improve the grinding and sawing capacities of the old mills, he could do little to improve the stream on which the whole depended. Rising in a small lake not half a mile from the mills, and fed by innumerable springs, all the way down, it had a splendid fall, and neither the drought of summer nor the frost of winter affected its even flow. Its parent lake, covering an area of thirty or forty acres, is something of a curiosity by the way. Parts of it are profoundly deep, but along the shelving banks, and on one or two bars running nearly to the middle there are only a few inches of water, and here there is constant precipitation of lime in fine white particles, probably the result of carbonic acid from decaying vegetation uniting with the lime in solution in the water of the lake. This precipitation of lime appears to have been going on for ages, for the soil to an unknown depth all around the shore, and along the entire basin and bed of the river running from the lake, is nothing but a mass of granulated lime waiting for some cohesive agent to turn it into rock, or, more likely, for some ingenious farmer to apply it to the purposes of agriculture.

When Mr. Perth entered into possession, there were no other mills within a radius of thirty miles, so that it was no more than reasonable to expect a fair return from any outlay that would be required to put them in a state of efficiency. A thorough renewal of the whole was accordingly decided upon. This was a big job, involving considerable labor and expense, but commencing it early in the Spring, it was completed in time for the first grist of the following harvest, to the great satisfaction of the whole country around.

It must have been when his customers were lounging about waiting their turn at the mill, smoking Mr. Small's tobacco, that the idea of a mill store occurred to the shrewd Aberdonian. These men might as well buy their tea and tobacco from him as walk all the way to the wee tailor's; and surely he could sell as cheap as Mr. Small, and was in a position to "trade" or deal in kind to a much larger extent than his rival, who could only handle butter and eggs, and that to a limited extent; whereas Mr. Perth would

be no loser by taking the wheat, even at its highest market price, for he could turn it into flour, which was a cash article and always in demand.

It was a serious blow to the wee tailor, who would now have to compete in business, as well as in township politics with a man of substance and ability. Mr. Small had long ago given up preaching and taken to the forum. He had been Reeve of the township ever since its recognition as a body corporate, which took place five or six years previous to the advent of Mr. Perth, and was the result mainly of the tailor's effort and enterprise. A fault-finding opposition might easily discover some weak points in his administration of public affairs. It was a matter of notoriety, that ever since the organization of the Township Municipality, and the School Section, Mr. Small's business had been greatly extended. People remembered how he succeeded in obtaining the sanction of the County Council—a body composed of the Reeves of the townships—to a motion by which the municipality over which he had the honour to preside, was authorised to borrow a considerable sum of money on the credit of his township debentures—how the said money, in great part, went to pay a cloud of petty orders, drawn by himself in his official capacity as Reeve, in favour of parties who had been small contractors for work on the public roads—how the said orders, although legally enough drawn on the treasurer, that individual, in some unaccountable way, had seen fit to dishonour, until, despairing of ever seeing their money, the holders had been glad to avail themselves of their Reeve's generous offer to discount for them. Of course this could only be done in trade, and the rate of discount, owing to the great risk and uncertainty of the transaction, would have to be *fifty per cent.* From the debenture scheme, however, there resulted an overflowing exchequer, and the credit of the municipality was triumphantly sustained by paying twenty shillings in the pound. The contractors who had accepted the composition grumbled a little, and remembered the transaction.

Among the liabilities of the municipality discharged in full out of this plethora of public funds, were several years arrears of school moneys, which enabled the section to build a very respectable school house. Sometimes a new Methodist preacher, not yet into the secret, at the close of his discourse in the new edifice, for it was as yet the only meeting house, would be betrayed into eulogizing the intelligence of "a community which had distinguished itself by such a noble effort to promote the cause of education." "In com-

paring the school houses he had seen in other parts of the country, with this elegant, roomy, and comfortable structure he was constrained to admire the wisdom, and liberality of the settlers of Corning's Mills, and it was a source of great satisfaction to him, that his lot should be cast for a time among such an open-handed people.

It was a good joke, much relished by the opposition, who were fond of ventilating the debenture scheme as a means of taking the wind out of Mr. Small's sails at the next election of Councilmen and School Trustees.

Little rivalries like these exist in all rising settlements, and the fact should be known if a little at the reader's expense.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE WIDOW.

A highly respectable border Scotsman, of the name of McCrie, who had been brought up a tanner and currier, and had carried on at home a small business on his own account, finding that with the limited means at his disposal there was rather a small chance of successfully competing with others longer established, and possessed of more capital than he could command, made up his mind to try what his skill and industry could do for him in the new world. Arriving with his family in the fall of 18—, he took the wise plan recommended by a friend, of moving at once to a comparatively new settlement, and took the first chance of work that offered in his line, waiting in patience for more light as to the ways of the country, and his proper course therein.

Hearing at length of Corning's Mills, he visited the place, and finding that the prospect of an opening for a small business in the way of his trade, was somewhat encouraging, made a bargain with the new proprietor for a small lot of three or four acres having a stream with a water privilege upon it.



Having put up a two story log house, the upper part to serve as a dwelling for the meantime, he moved his family in and proceeded with the fitting up of his vats and a water-wheel. Here, not having previously been called upon to apply the hydrodynamics involved in his profession, and too readily listening to those whose experience in that department of practical science was even less than his own, he found that his vats would not hold in, and the water-wheel would not turn the bark mill. Other plans were tried but with no better success. Had Mr. McCrie not been bound to succeed, here was a good chance to give the whole thing up in disgust. He had worked hard and spent his last shilling, but if he could only get his business in operation, there was a fair prospect of doing well. With some little assistance from a friend, a practical mechanic was found to undertake the job under bonds to complete it to satisfaction, and in due time the thing was done to perfection. The bark of the hemlock, used almost exclusively for tanning in Canada could be obtained at a merely nominal price, and of the raw material a fair supply could always be reckoned on, as every farmer killed a beef or two once a year for home use, and what was taken to market was also killed at home, it it being easier to team it out in sleighing than to drive it out. Hides, therefore, began to grow into leather, a shoemaker was engaged to work it up for the market, in the shape of long coarse boots, which being the only thing worn was in considerable demand and a cash article. Thus the business assumed an encouraging aspect. Tanning is not a bad business in the backwoods where the shoemaker and saddler can work up the produce of the tannery, and in this instance it bode fair to do well. Mr. McCrie was well posted in his trade, and with great industry and frugality the clouds that had been gathering around him gradually broke up and dispersed. Mr. McCrie had acquired a character for perseverance and integrity; he was strictly conscientious and imbued with deep religious convictions, a most valuable addition to the settlement. He was the first to take an interest in the religious and secular instruction of the young, and devoted much of his time and energy to the establishment of a Sunday school, of which he became an efficient teacher and superintendent. For several years everything went well, he built a fine dwelling house on the hill above the tannery, and could now look forward to the enjoyment and convenience of a suitable and substantial habitation, but, alas! in singular verification of the old French proverb, "When the house is finished death enters," he no sooner had every-

thing ready when the "blind fury with the abhorred shears" put an end to it all. A favourite child died at the same time, and of the two now sleeping side by side in their forest grave it is written on a marble slab, white as drifted snow, that "they were lovely and pleasant in their life. and in their death they were not divided."

It would be hard to conceive of a blight more desolating than what thus befel this worthy family, far away from home and friends. What was the poor widow with four helpless children to do? She tried to sell the place, but nobody would buy. She was urged to go back to Scotland, but the dread of being a burden upon others would not let her. Nobody could conceive of what it was possible for her to do. What she did resolve to do affords a striking illustration of that characteristic Scotch courage which rises so nobly to the promptings of duty—while the life was in her she never would submit to see her children paupers, nor would she sit down and see them starve, but she would gather together the wreck of her husband's means, and, God helping her, keep a little store—a "wee shop" as she would have said long ago—rather an unpromising outlook in such a place as Corning's Mills. Lose or win, however, she would try, and did try. The little store was near the school house now overflowing, and the young folks became frequent if not very substantial customers, and not unseldom were intrusted with orders from home, when fathers and mothers were too busy to go shopping themselves. Mrs. McCrie could not hope to compete with her more wealthy rivals, working as she did with so many disadvantages—but people admired her pluck, and gave her a share of their custom. "It was aye something" as the brave little woman used to say.

The three stores, the origin of which has thus been given, being all in the vicinity of the mills, constituted with these the rudiments of a village, to which have to be added the tavern, the school, and the blacksmith's shop. The weaver had also set up his loom, and the shoemaker his stool. Something interesting to intending settlers might be told of each and all.

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## CHAPTER VI.

MR. PEACH.

We Canadians believe that we have hit very nearly the right thing in our Common School System, which in its practical operation is essentially a popular one, while at the same time it rests on a basis such as to render it to a considerable extent independent of the fluctuations of popular sentiment.

It had its commencement in the year 1841, and embodies the principle of a legislative grant being apportioned to each county, on condition of, at least, an equal amount, or "equivalent" as it is called, being raised by local assessment. The extent of the legislative grant is determined annually by Parliament, and its distribution by the Chief Superintendent of Education among the different townships, is on the basis of population. The amount awarded to each township is then apportioned by the Local School Superintendent, to each School Section in the township according to the average attendance of pupils throughout the half year. Then comes the "equivalent" voted by the County Council, and very often exceeding the grant. At the same time each county raises an amount sufficient to cover the working expenses of its own Board of Public Instruction. Neither the grant nor equivalent can be applied to any other purpose than the part payment of the teacher's salary; the balance of which may be made up in three different ways: by voluntary contribution, by rate bill of not more than twenty-five cents, or a British shilling per pupil, per month, or by a tax levied on all the freeholders and householders of the School Section. This last is now the prevailing practice, for out of the total number of School Sections reported in the year 1867, namely 4,422, there were 3,838 maintained in this way.

The presiding authority over the whole system is sometimes called the "Educational Department," but this is a euphemism, as the head thereof is neither a Cabinet minister nor a member of Parliament. It consists of a Council of Public Instruction, and Chief Superintendent of Schools, who is, ex-officio, a member of the Council. Both are appointed by the Crown.

The Chief Superintendent, apportions the School Fund, prepares

the general school regulations, the forms of reports and modes of all school proceedings under the Act; takes the general superintendence of the Normal School; provides facilities for procuring text and library books; prepares annual reports; corresponds with local school authorities throughout the Province; and uses his influence generally for the promotion of education and the diffusion of useful knowledge.

The Local Superintendents are appointed by the County Councils, one for each township or union of townships, at their pleasure. Their duty is to visit each School in their district twice a year, and to deliver annually one public lecture on education in each section; to apportion the Legislative grant and the equivalent, giving cheques on the township treasurers, payable to the teachers qualified by legal certificate to receive the same, to assist in the examination of teachers unprovided with Provincial certificates, obtained only at the Normal School, after a due course of training and study therein; and to report annually to the Chief Superintendent. The law allows them at least one pound a year for each school under their charge.

This system of Local Superintendents, especially in the back townships, has been found to work rather indifferently, owing to the lack of men properly qualified to discharge the duties of the office. As an instance I may mention that our adroit little friend, the Corning's Mills tailor, managed to secure the appointment one year, drew his salary, and resigned, his business being of so much importance that it was a positive loss to be away from it. A bill is just now before the Legislature of Ontario which will put an end to this, however, and it provides that there shall be a Local Superintendent appointed for each county, who shall be paid a sufficient salary, for attending to nothing else but the care of the schools.

At present each county has a Board of Public Instruction, composed of the Local Superintendents and the Trustees of the Grammar School of the County. It meets generally four times a year, and examines teachers applying for County Certificates. The programme of examination is furnished by the Council of Public Instruction for the Province, and provides for three classes, A, B, and C.

Each School Section is presided over by a Board of three Trustees, elected by the freeholders and householders of the section. The office is held for three years, but not simultaneously, as one is elected and one retires annually. It belongs to the office of trus-

tee to determine the *amount* of the teacher's salary and all expenses connected with the school, but it belongs to the people of each School Section, at a public meeting called for the purpose, to decide as to the *manner* in which such expenses shall be provided, whether by voluntary contribution, by rate bill, as above mentioned, or by tax on the freeholders and householders.

Such is an outline of our Common School System, which copies in part that of New York State in its machinery, and that of Massachusetts in its principle of support, while it makes use for purposes of instruction of the Irish National School Book, or did until recently, and follows Germany in its Normal School arrangements. To one great and good man, the Rev. Egerton Ryerson, D. D., we are indebted for much of the excellence which is to be found in the system itself, as well as for the efficiency of its working. He was appointed Chief Superintendent in the year 1844, an office which he still retains, and which, it is to be hoped, he will long live to adorn.

The Legislative grant for 1867, amounted to \$172,542, the equivalent raised by the municipalities, amounted to \$351,873. The Rate Bill System produced \$51,197. And over and above the equivalent, some of the wealthier section taxed themselves to the amount of \$799,708. Nor is this all that has been devoted to Common School purposes. From the Clergy Reserves and other available funds \$280,401 have been added. The total \$1,655,721.

Looking for a moment at the expenditure we find that \$1,093,516 were paid for teacher's salaries, \$31,354 for maps and other educational apparatus, and \$149,195 for sites and building school houses.

The number of teachers is set down in the Report of 1867 as 4,890, of whom 2,849 were males and 2,041 females,

The school population of Ontario, from 5 to 16 years of age, is at present 447,726, of these 380,511 attended school for a longer or shorter period during 1867.

The average salary for male teachers was \$262, for females, \$189. The highest salary paid in a city was \$1,350, the lowest \$225. The highest in a town was \$1,000, in a village \$560.

The organization of the School Section at Corning's Mills was in great part the work of our friend Mr. Small, and followed closely upon the township's attaining to the rank of a municipality. All that was required to be done was to get the Township Council to name a person to give the notice of the first school meeting, at which the freeholders and householders, all having a vote, proceed



to elect the trustees. The result being made known to the Local Superintendent, and through him to the Educational Department, the new School Section was placed under the provisions of the School Act; the Trustees became a body corporate, with perpetual succession, and a common seal, capable of suing and being sued of pleading and being impleaded in all courts of competent jurisdiction.

The next thing was to look out for a teacher, and the first selection made was a female, the daughter of one of the settlers who had been at school in former days, and knew a little of "the three Rs,"—"readin, ritin, and rithmitic,"—of which the rising generation of Corning's Mills, the indigenous portion especially were lamentably ignorant.

Miss Vanwick obtained a third class certificate and did her best with the little ones, but when the winter set in, releasing the older boys from the duties of the farm, there was a general rush to the school, and the teacher found she had enough to do. With no previous training or experience, she found it so hard to maintain proper discipline among her pupils, who had never before been under pedagogic restraint, that the poor thing had to give it up. Then followed an interregnum of several weeks. At length the trustees had the good fortune to secure the services of a real patriarch in the profession, just out from Edinburgh, with a whole volume of certificates, and several diplomas in parchment framed and gilded; these with his reverend aspect procured him an engagement at once.

Mr. Peach had operated on the young idea for upwards of thirty years. He was an elder in the Kirk, and a man of great intelligence and respectability—it was something odd to meet with his like in such a place as Corning's Mills. But queer illustrations of the vicissitudes of human life are to be met with in a new country. Not far from the school house we are speaking of, struggling on a bush farm, lived a veritable knight, the descendant of an ancient and an honourable family, and among the crowd who came in quest of free grants, was a man who had filled a professor's chair, and could write both M.D. and D.D. to his name—the last time I saw him he was making shingles in a swamp: the reader may guess the reason.

Mr. Peach's reason for being at Corning's Mills was this—and it was no discredit to him: He was the father of a large family of growing sons, a constant drain upon the revenues of a common city school which he "keepit" and "ca'ed an acawdemy." It re-

quired careful financing, on the part of Mrs. Peach, to make both ends meet, and still have a scraping left. But years of thrift at length enabled the old teacher to gratify his long cherished wish to go to the new world, not for his own sake, but with the hope of seeing his sons in a position of honest independence. He had several acquaintances in Canada, some of them old pupils, one of whom was the means of guiding his course to a small but flourishing town, some twenty or thirty miles distant from Corning's Mills, where shortly after his arrival he was engaged as teacher for one year, the usual term of agreement in our Common Schools under the present system. Here Mr. Peach remained for two years, during which his sons had been all over, hired out to farmers.

It so happened that our friend the tanner had met Mr. Peach in his travels, and being at the time established at Corning's Mills, and getting over his difficulties, he thought it would be a good thing to secure the services of the old Edinburgh teacher for his own section. The old man was very glad of the chance; and, although the salary was not up to what he had been receiving, there was a better prospect of his attaining to what he considered the main object—a home and a hundred acres of land.

In due time the wish of the old man's heart was gratified. The land was bought. His sons turned out good workers, and the people being satisfied with his teaching, he was engaged year after year, until the clearing was so far advanced as to render him independent of his profession.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### JOHN GILMOUR'S EXPERIENCE.

Twenty-five years ago, when Fergus O'Connor, of Chartist celebrity, was propounding his foolish land scheme, there was considerable excitement over it, among the weavers and other operatives of several towns of the west of Scotland. Paisley, long noted for shawls and spouting weavers, was especially smitten as

to its Chartist element, with the "small farm" fever. Number connected themselves with the movement, paying into the concern two, three, and four shillings a week, of their hard earnings, for the glorious chance of becoming the lucky owner of a farm of *four acres*—proved by Chartist logic every week, in the columns of the "Northern Star," to be more than enough for the wants of any reasonable family.

It is worthy of remark that the movement now going on in the East End of London, with a view to the encouragement of emigration to this country, embraces something very like the system of the Irish Chartist leader of twenty years ago, the feasibility of which applied in a common sense way to the question of emigration, is not to be doubted.

John Gilmour was a great admirer of the "Northern Star," and a convert to the land scheme, which, along with the "Five Points," formed the chief subject of discussion in the leading articles of that enterprising "poor man's paper" as it was called. He had paid up the subscription, something like five pounds, which entitled him to a throw, but, if I recollect right, the chance was only one in a hundred, and fortunately for poor John, it never came. The whole thing ended in smoke. It had this effect upon the weaver, however—he determined to make a strike for a hundred acres in Canada.

John had been a shawl weaver, when that branch of the business still afforded the means of a livelihood to the ordinary workman; but the time came when only the more superior tradesman could be entrusted with the production of the elaborate and expensive shawls then in vogue, so that, not ranking among the first-class artists of his profession, John had to "pit up wi' a bit tartan;" but, industrious man as he was, and blessed with a thrifty guide wife, who rocked the cradle, and "kep the pirn-wheel bummin' frae mornin' ta nicht," he was after all, notwithstanding the unfortunate result of his recent land speculation, able to save a few pounds, a rare thing in a weaver of his day. Paisley weavers are well represented among the yeomanry of Canada at the present day, and few have made better pioneers than they. Their long practice at pitching the shuttle from right to left, and from left to right, was of capital assistance to their acquiring the proper swing of the axe. But the Paisley weaver of twenty years ago seldom thought of emigrating, he was then too poor, and the slavery of the loom had begotten a craven fear of out door labour, and an aversion to change which were hard to overcome. Distance, instead



of lending enchantment to the view, gave him faintness and sinking of the heart. But John Gilmour was determined not to give way to any such weakness. It would be hard to give up his old haunts, his Sunday walks to Gleniffer, and "a' the bonnie places roon about"—yet for their sakes, that were dearer to him than all the world, nothing in the way of mere sentiment should be allowed to interfere with his determination of making a bold stroke for liberty in the land of freedom and plenty. In accordance with this resolution he succeeded, after years of toil, in raising a sum sufficient to bring himself and his family to Canada. By strange chance he found himself landed at Corning's Mills. When he arrived at the tavern he had only a few shillings in his pocket. A dreadful picture of his situation our friends at home would be apt to conceive—a stranger in a strange land, and so destitute! The weaver must have been "daft" or wicked, in tempting providence after this manner. It is an extreme case I admit, but not at all dreadful in a country like this. The weaver, it must be confessed, was not in the best of spirits on finding himself at the end of his journey and his means nearly exhausted. The tavern had a dreary, forsaken look about it, and it was sometime before any one appeared to notice his arrival. At length the mistress came into the bar-room, where the poor immigrant and his family sat looking at one another. "I guess you'll want some supper," was the first question of the hostess, and without waiting for a reply passed into the kitchen, and busied herself in the preparation of the meal. In the course of half an hour, supper was announced, and the party sat down to a plentiful supply of fried potatoes, cold ham, bread and butter and tea. All the men about the house were at work in the harvest field, and would be out late hauling in the last of the grain. It was concluded, therefore, that nothing could be done that night, so they all retired to rest.

Early next morning the weaver was stirring, and thought he might walk out a mile or two, and have a look round before breakfast. It was a busy time with the farmers, and numbers were already at work cutting their grain. A few lots up from the tavern John spied a fine new house into which the owner appeared to be just moving. There was a neat picket fence round it, but the enclosure was white with lime, and full of confused heaps of lumber, stone and dirt. It stood close to the lane leading from the main road, and the weaver already feeling that this was a "free country" he had got into, decided to have a closer inspection of

the premises. It struck him in a shrewd way that perhaps he might get a job here, if it was only to *rede* up things a little.

The land sloped somewhat abruptly down from the rear of the new building, and as he advanced along the lane, the hollow on the other side became visible, revealing several other buildings of a much humbler appearance, being what the weaver at once suspected, the original log-house, barn and stables, of the owner of the lot, a good-natured fellow of the name of Williamson, who was coming up the hill at the moment, and seeing a stranger in the lane, bid him "good morning," and as breakfast was just then being announced by blast of long tin horn, from the rear of the new establishment, John received an invitation to join in the morning meal, which he gladly accepted. In the conversation at the table, he freely communicated his prospects and intentions. "He didna ken a great deal about the wark, but he was baith able and willin' to learn," if he "had only a bit hoose to gang into, and something to begin wi." Williamson said nothing, but after breakfast he asked John to take a walk round the farm. It is with no small pride that the farmer shows off his land, especially when it is his own, and he can give you the history of its clearing. "There, where that old barn stands, he had chopped the first tree more'n 25 years ago; and that there old log house, him and his wife did the raisin' on it. Them *was* hard times, now I tell you.

They went round the fields where the grain was cut down, looked at the root crops, the cattle, sheep, horses, and so on. The weaver was in raptures. It was a bonnie place. "An' hae ye din a' this yersel', na?"

"Well I guess I didn't cut every stick you see in most of them there back fields, but I did my share of chopping the first ten years. Me and Reub Hall started to underbrush the same day—that's Reub's place, that there shanty crost the other side—well you see, he haint much more'n a good tater patch about him. He's a good enough neighbour, is Reub, but you see how it is. I don't believe in a man loafing round them there taverns all the time. When a man has land to clear up, he's got to stick to it that's so."

John understood enough of the above to venture the remark, "that there was an unco difference between him and his neebour ony way."

Thinking it was now time to return to the tavern and see after his family, John was pleased to hear Williamson propose to accompany him, "and have a chat with the old woman." As they went

along he made particular enquiries as to the weaver's capabilities and expectations. After seeing Mrs. Gilmour and the children, he told them he wanted to hire a man for the winter, and if they could agree on the terms, he would let them have the use of the old house, which, with a little fixing up before the cold weather set in, would do very well for a start. He had intended it for a sheep pen, or some such thing, but his flock would be no worse off than it had been before, and perhaps he would have time to fix up some other place.

From the end of harvest till the frost sets in, there is always enough to do on a large farm in Canada; and the farmer who manages to get the most ploughing done in the Fall, has a better chance of a good seeding in the Spring, and, generally speaking, an early seeding with the ground in good order, is the best insurance against the early autumn frost which are a great plague in some new settlements. The farmer who has eighty or one hundred acres of clearing, can spend every hour between the plough handles from the end of harvest till winter sets in, and it is well for him if he has boys to attend to the cattle and the root crops. Williamson had lots of ploughing to do, and wanted to go into it at once, as he intended to try Fall wheat this year. His oldest boy had cut his foot with the axe, and was laid up for a month at least, the rest of the youngsters, somewhat behind in their education, were anxious to go to school,—so if John Gilmour had no objection to hauling out manure, lifting and pitting potatoes and turnips, husking corn and feeding cattle, Williamson would give him a trial for a quarter, at a salary of ten dollars a month, with board for himself, and the use of the old log house for his family included. Small pay it is true, but then he was only a "greenhorn" and did not know much about hard work.

John had the good sense to accept the offer. Always in speaking of his first set out, which was a favourite theme, he seldom omitted the remark, "Ma advice to a new comer, is ta tak haud o' the first thing that comes ta his haun, because, ye see, he'll be learnin' a' the time."

This arrangement with Williamson settled the difficulty. Before noon they had taken possession of their new home. On his arrival at Toronto, John had talked the matter over with the emigration agent there, a very affable and obliging gentleman, who directed him in the purchase of such articles of household economy, as he deemed indispensable to the kind of adventure which the weaver, owing to his straitened circumstances was obliged



to undertake. These, with the few things he had brought with him from Scotland, were left in the care of an acquaintance he had picked up on the road, and were to be sent to him on the first opportunity, so that they had no luggage with them but what they could carry in two or three good sized parcels, with which they had footed it from where they had met this acquaintance—some thing like thirty miles.

Towards evening a few of the neighbours called in, and finding how things stood, set to work and knocked together a couple of rough deal bedsteads, two or three benches, a table, and a few other useful things. The Gilmours had been wise enough to bring a few bed clothes, and a couple of ticks with them, which, being filled with fresh oat straw from Williamson's barn, furnished them with good wholesome beds. As they had no stove, one of the neighbours offered to lend them his old camp oven, which came very handy, as there was a good fire-place in the house, and plenty of "chips" in the lane before the door, where the stove-wood had been chopped for the last twenty-five years. A few other necessary utensils were contributed by one and another of their visitors, and Mrs. Gilmour, having saved a little of her old country black tea, proposed a cup to the neighbours who had so kindly lent their assistance. Mrs. Williamson furnished the eatables. The weaver, in asking a blessing on the humble meal, did so with a feeling of gratitude in his heart which quite overcame him.

They had brought with them an assortment of little shawls, scarfs, and other articles of men and women's wear, which they shrewdly expected to be able to sell or trade away for other things they might require, and Mrs. Gilmour in a pleasant way intimated the fact at supper, and, of course, there was a general desire to see the goods, with which they were so pleased, that every one took something, agreeing to pay for the articles, some with one thing some with another.

One of the farmers took a fancy to Maggie, the oldest, a bonnie lassie almost woman grown, and wished them to send her over in the morning to his "old woman," who would be glad to hire her. Another was willing to take Jamie, a lad of about fourteen years of age; so that there was only the mistress herself and the youngest, also a boy, who might also have been taken off their hands, but they preferred that he should stay with his mother for a while.

Thus, did the poor weaver commence his humble career, yet humble as it was, he already began to feel that there was hope in it. Out-door labour, for a few weeks, felt irksome and fatiguing,

but pure air and an abundance of wholesome food made him strong and before his three months were up he got quite seasoned to the work.

Winter had now set in, when there was less to be done, except with the axe, which he had not yet learned to handle as a chopper, and consequently he might have to submit to work at reduced wages. It was his intention to fit up a loom so soon as he could accomplish it, but the season was now too far advanced to do anything at it this year. By next fall, however, he hoped to be prepared, and would employ his long evenings during the winter in getting the loom and machinery ready. He therefore concluded to remain on with Williamson at a reduction of two dollars a month. If he was earning but little money, he felt satisfied that he was getting experience of the country, what money could not buy.

"I maun just pit up wi' it, for I'm only a 'prentice, and canna' expec to be a journeyman a' at ance."

John stuck to the good old Doric. "It was a' nonsense in the like o' him to be tryin' to speak proper." "I'm ow'er long a beginnin' an' wad only mak a cuddy o' mysel'."

If at home, with his old country notions, John had been told that all he would get to do in the winter, in Canada, would be to feed swine, his imagination might have suggested the picture of the prodigal son, with the probability that he too might have to fill his belly with the husks, and, in all likelihood, the thought of it, might have helped to reconcile him to pease-brose and the treddle-hole for the remainder of his days. But the reality never suggested the idea. In fact all he had to do with the pigs was to see that they had plenty of pease, now that they were being fattened for winter provision.

The pig is the subject of rather peculiar treatment in the backwoods. No attention whatever is bestowed on him, until he appears deserving of it, that is, until it is seen that it will "pay" to turn him into pork. Up to this point he has to fight for his living the best way he can. His main dependence in summer is the grass on the road sides, while it lasts, which is not often after the first or second week in July, for both cattle and sheep must have their share. When this legitimate means of obtaining a livelihood fails he has no other resource but thieving, at which he is a perfect adept; every hole and corner must be stopped or he will be in at the crops, but woe betide his ears if "Watch" or "Colley" sees him at these tricks. He has always the run of the



fields after harvest, and generally makes a good thing out of that but until then he has some hard days to put in. Sometimes he takes to the bush about this time, but whether for the purpose of hunting squirrels, or trying if there is anything in last year's beech-nuts, I never could find out. Let there be a good crop of peas, however, and a fair prospect of his profiting thereby in the matter of weight, he will soon be looked after.

Williamson having a heavy pea crop this Fall, put up about a dozen of them, five or six for home consumption, and the rest for the market. These, to sell well, would have to be kept as long as they took on flesh, or as long as the feed lasted. They would then be killed dressed and allowed to freeze, in which condition they might be teamed out and sold, anytime when the roads were good. Part of John Gilmour's duty, therefore, was to see that they had plenty to eat and drink. There were also two or three beef cattle to be got ready for the Spring market. But besides attending to the live stock, there was plenty to do in the barn, cleaning up and bagging grain, of which there were about 600 bushels to be teamed out during the winter, so that John had plenty to do, but the days were short, and he thought it far better than pitching the weary shuttle sixteen hours a day, for fourteen shillings a week, with oatmeal and red herrings to breakfast and supper.

Before this, his second engagement, was completed, he had the chance offered him of going upon a bush lot close by, the terms being that he was to clear as much as he could of it, and for every acre cleared and fenced he was to receive five dollars, and have the use of the whole for ten years.

Arrangements of this kind are common, though it seems hard that a man should have to clear up land and not have it of his own when all is done; still in a good place where it is all hard wood land, and not too heavily timbered, one who has no means of doing better, and knowing how to go about it, may get along pretty well. The object is to get as much as possible cleared the first three or four years, and then take all the good out of it that can be got. It answers best for those who have some trade which they can follow during part of the year. After sugar making, which completed his winter's engagement, John's obliging employer, or "boss," as we have it in Canada, gave him a day or two's assistance in cutting down, hauling, and preparing the logs for the raising of his house. This took about half a day, all the more immediate neighbours attended, and all it cost the weaver was a dinner and a gallon of whiskey. He had still the building to

floor, roof, and finish up inside, but he could do a great part of this himself, and his promise to pay by the labours of his loom, furnished him with the necessary material. In two or three weeks John had a house of his own, with a corner for his loom, and the prospect of plenty to do, as soon as the sheep were shorn and the wool carded and spun. Meantime, he can be getting a few acres chopped for potatoes and a little wheat, and next Fall, provided he has a good season at the loom, he may be able to hire a man for the winter, so as to push forward the work of clearing.

"This Spring will be pretty hard upon you John, but keep up your heart, you are stronger and manlier since you came to Canada; your boys have a better prospect before them than they could have had in Paisley, and in a few years, if you are spared, you will have a place of your own, and they will help you to clear it," "I houp so," was John's reply, and I may just add, that he was not disappointed.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE RAYMONDS.

To most people of the present day, an enterprise approaching in similarity to that of our old friend Corning, would be considered as deservedly entitled to the epithet, "romantic," especially if undertaken by a man of means. And yet, under the very different auspices that it might be attempted in these days of roads, railways, mills and markets everywhere, with a tide of immigration sweeping over the country, soon to reach the most distant points, there will always be some hardy spirits not afraid to venture in the van of settlement.

A pioneer capitalist is not often to be met with however, unless indeed some speculative native, who knows pretty well what he is about. For a *gentlemen* to build up an estate in the far distant woods, would be a very questionable proceeding, although the

thing has been done over and over again, and with much better success than in Mrs. Moodie's time.

And may be there are still some young men—I have read of them in books—who, fancying themselves at the end of all further endeavour in their particular sphere, talk a great deal of nonsense about a "new career" in the grand old forests of the New World living with nature, and learning her secrets, finding "tongues in trees," &c., &c. Of course, if they have lots of money to spare, it might do them good to try, but they would be extraordinary types of their class if the backwoods' life suited them long.

It would make all the difference in the world in the case of one who knew what he was doing, and had sufficient experience of the country. If his selection of a place was a good one, he would very soon turn it to account. Nor, let him go ever so far away, would he have to wait long for others to follow, for under the new Homestead Act, it is supposed that the country round is free to actual settlers. In a few years he might have a flourishing settlement about him. He would have the shrewdness to see that the land had water-privileges on it; in which case, he would have the first grist and saw mill erected, the carding mill would soon follow, so would the tavern, the store, the post office, the church, the school, the township and county municipalities, in which, as councilman, reeve or warden, he might possibly graduate in time for the honourable position of parliamentary representative, although, if bent only on making money, he would know enough to avoid the honour as much as possible.

If inconvenient for our capitalist to superintend personally the first operations of clearing, he would find a reliable man to undertake the work for him, who, with a number of hands, say from ten to fifteen, all of them accustomed to lumbering, and working under a foreman, would proceed to the location in the month of September, taking with them from the nearest depot their winter's supply of flour pork and tea. After putting up their shanty, they would commence at once to underbrush, that is, cut out all the saplings, so as not to interfere with the regular work of chopping, which would thereafter be their constant employment during the winter, in spite of the snow. Next summer would be fully occupied burning, logging, cleaning up, and fencing the fallow, which ought to be a pretty good sized one, not less than two hundred acres, if they had been all the time chopping from the 1st of October to the 1st of May. It is to be taken into account that the ashes of the burnt up logs heaps have all been gathered



stored away in a house built for the purpose, and if this is followed up by the making of potash, men accustomed to the business will have to be found to attend to it. It will be well worth the trouble.

As to the expense of the undertaking, the easiest calculation is to set it down at a cost of twenty dollars an acre, or four thousand dollars for the two hundred acres, which is from three to five dollars an acre, more than it would be in a comparatively settled locality, where the same work could be got done by letting it out in small contracts to the settlers, always open to such, as a means of obtaining a little ready money, but, not in the same time, so that what would be a gain in one way, would be a loss in another, that is if time were an object. The cost of the land varying from one to five dollars an acre, has to be added, and, say the capitalist had bought a thousand acres at the latter price, his outlay will amount to nine thousand dollars, to which, if he intends living on the place, add another thousand for buildings. But the man who has all this money would be likely to see after the spending of it himself, in which case he would have to put up a house at first, and "rough it" with his family, as best he could for a while.

But to proceed with a case in actual life, one in which the conditions are not a little different from the above, by which the adventure of a pioneer capitalist of the present day is contrasted with what it used to be.

The Raymonds were a family of the middle rank from the north of Ireland, consisting of a widow, two sons and a daughter. They came to the settlement shortly after the Gilmours, and now occupy the two lots adjoining them. The oldest son, James, was about twenty-five years of age when I first saw him, a quiet observant fellow, who kept his own counsel, and seemed more anxious to hear than to speak. He came alone looking for work, representing himself as a stranger, ignorant of the ways of the country, but willing to do anything, and learn the work. It was the Spring of the year and he soon found employment. A keen Yorkshire man saw a good chance of making something out of him, and hired him for six months. During this period of voluntary servitude he picked up a great deal of useful experience and information. He learned to be a good judge of land, and how to proceed in the event of his purchasing a lot of his own. At length he found land to suit him, and then we learned, for the first time, that his mother and the rest of the family were residing in a village some forty miles distant, where they had settled on first coming to the



country, and where the old lady, assisted by her daughter, had commenced a private school for instruction in the ordinary branches, along with plain and fancy sewing. This had enabled them not to break upon their capital, which amounted to about one thousand pounds sterling.

It was the middle of September when young Raymond completed his engagement with the Yorkshire man, and by this time he had bought his land, a lot of two hundred acres, for which he paid, cash down, the sum of fourteen hundred dollars. Property was getting to be worth something at Corning's Mills.

He had also let out the chopping and clearing up of three acres, where he intended to build a house. This cost him about fifty dollars, and he contracted to have the house put up and finished by the first of December. It was a frame, enclosed with two inch hemlock planks, and weather-boarded with half inch pine. It measured 30 x 25 feet, and had a summer kitchen in the rear and an underground cellar, with stone walls, on which the building rested. It was divided into six apartments, a large parlour, which would have to be a sort of kitchen in winter, another smaller parlour, a dining room, and three small bedrooms—a very convenient, snug little house, when plastered in the inside, but this would have to be put off till next year. The whole was to cost something like five hundred dollars.

Everything being ready about the time sleighing commenced, Raymond hired a couple of teams, and set out to bring home his mother and sister—the younger brother remaining in the village where he had got a situation as clerk in a store. In a few days they all arrived in safety—the old lady, very proud of her son's achievement, as well she might, for he had acted an uncommonly prudent part.

Towards the latter end of October, when the framers were busy at the house, and the clearing of the three acres above mentioned was completed, he let out the chopping of other twenty acres, to two separate parties, five acres of each contract to be ready, and under fence, by the fifteenth of May, in time for spring crops, and the balance, not later than the fifteenth of September, in time for fall wheat. This was to cost sixteen dollars an acre. The whole was now underbrushed, and some of it cut. While the work was progressing, Raymond himself was not idle. He hired a man at fourteen dollars a month, with board, and set to work to put up a temporary shed for a cow, and a yoke of oxen which he had bought. He then went and hauled out a number of saw logs

which he took to the mill and had cut on shares. By this means he obtained without any direct outlay as much lumber as did for a large frame barn, to be raised the following summer, and had several thousand feet to sell. The choppers were glad to get rid of the hemlock, as it is hard to burn, and it so happened that there were lots of it on the twenty acres that were being cleared, which saved Raymond the trouble of cutting it down elsewhere. Its abundance, at the same time, enabled him to furnish the tannery with some thirty or forty cords of the bark, at one dollar per cord.

Another important part of his winter's work was to haul out an immense pile of the best maple logs from the fallow, which he let his hired man to cut up for firewood. Part of this was piled up for the use of the house, and the remainder sold to the school trustees at ninety cents a cord, of 128 cubic feet, the measurement by which firewood is bought and sold, both in Canada and the United States. Each stick is four feet in length, if from a log over ten inches in diameter it has to be split—the pile is four feet high, by eight feet long, when measured in single cords, but if in large quantities, the three dimensions are multiplied together, and the product divided by 128, which gives the number of cords. In the country, they are not so particular about piling, but in the cities, where the cord is often worth seven dollars, the seller takes good care to make it *bulk* as much as possible.

Poor settlers have generally a very thriftless way of attending to the wants of the cooking-stove; the usual method being, to haul a few green logs to the chip-pile before the door, and cut up a little every day, but the introduction of sawing machines, driven by horse-power, is now becoming general, and by their means a whole year's wood can be cut in a day, and when well seasoned it is a great benefit to the cook, and takes less to keep a good fire going.

Besides the work above mentioned, Raymond managed, before the winter was over, to take out, and square the logs required for the frame barn and stable, which he intended to raise the following summer. The timber used for this purpose is generally elm, and the tallest and straightest trees, not over eighteen inches in diameter, are selected. The squaring is done with the "broad-axe," in the same manner that they prepare timber for exportation. After this operation, the logs are ready for the framer, whose business it is to "lay out" the building, and he must be very careful with his measurements and cuttings so that everything

goes "slick" at the raising. It is a business not requiring a great amount of ingenuity, and being followed during only a part of the year, has helped many a poor man both to clear and pay for his farm. Very little difficulty would be felt in obtaining the service of a framer, as they are pretty numerous in the backwoods.

At length the snow went away, the spring was early and dry and before the time stipulated the contracting choppers had their ten acres ready for the seed. With the exception of a small turnip and potatoe patch next to the three acres first cleared, the whole was included in one field, and sown with spring wheat seeded down with grass at the same time. This is the usual practice when it is intended not to crop the field for a few years, until the stumps begin to soften, and the roots die away, so that the plough has a chance to get through. The grass keeps out the weeds, and being perennial, yields good hay as long as you please, with no other trouble than that of cutting and curing. It was Raymond's idea to go on chopping twenty acres a year for five or six years, always seeding down with the first crop; by the end of which time he would be able to break up the first field chopped; next year, the next, and so on. Although, as a general thing, the first crop (not to speak of the hay afterwards) pays for the clearing, it is a course which can hardly be adopted but by those who have a little capital, and to such it is a pleasant way of clearing up a farm; besides, by going into stock raising, as Raymond intended to do, it could be made profitable as well as pleasant.

In sowing new land, the seed is scattered on the ground just as the fire leaves it. The stumps of the burned up trees are still there, all black and charred, and the roots are down deep in the virgin loam. The "dragging" in of the seed is accomplished by means of an implement shaped like the letter V with short harrow teeth along the arms, its peculiar construction enabling it to steer through the maze of stumps without coming in contact with them. A quiet horse is better for dragging than oxen, as they are too slow, and it takes a tremendous running up and down to cover the seed by means of the V drag. Raymond took great pains with the first ten acres, sowed it, borrowed a horse, and harrowed it himself. Meantime, in preparation for plastering the house, his man was hauling sand and lime which had been burnt on a log heap in the fallow. These jobs accomplished, he went to work and hauled his lumber from the mill, piling it in readiness for the barn, which would soon be ready to raise. He also made a garden, by stumping half an acre, and enclosing it with a neat picket



fence—no light undertaking, when the stumps are large and green, for they have then to be dug out, and the roots cut with the axe; but Raymond was a fellow that never stuck at anything he commenced, and he was determined to have a garden.

And now came the raising of the barn and stables, but having occasion in the sequel to describe buildings of a similar character I shall only observe that they were fitted up with every convenience, and were as large and convenient as the best in the back townships usually are. Up to this point their expenses had been:—

For Price of land.....	\$1400
“ Building House.....	500
“ Yoke of Oxen.....	80
“ Two Cows.....	35
“ Clearing Three Acres.....	60
“ “ Twenty Acres.....	320
“ Frame Barn and Stables.....	300
“ Hired man for six months.....	84
“ House expenses for six months.....	200
“ School and County Tax, six months.....	20
“ Sundries.....	100
Total.....	\$3099

To meet their future expenses they had still a cash capital of about \$2,000 which could readily enough be invested in small loans to the farmers round on the very best security, and this is actually what was done. It was no extravagant calculation to make, that the first crop of wheat would pay for the clearing. Twenty bushels to the acre on new land, is far from being a large crop, and at one dollar a bushel, the proceeds of twenty acres would be \$400. But Raymond meant not only to make the first crop pay for the clearing, but to make it keep the house in flour. He would be careful in the choice of seed, careful in dragging it in, in harvesting and threshing it; and at the same time, by working in the fallow himself, either at chopping or logging, he hoped to reduce the cost of clearing considerably.

I need scarcely assure my readers that the Raymonds got on well in Canada, for they seemed to fall into the ways of the country, and do the right thing from the very beginning.



## CHAPTER IX.

## THE GATES'S ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

Of the settlers who accompanied or followed immediately in the wake of the old trapper, Corning, Daddy Gates is one of the few who remain unto this day. His extraction is somewhat doubtful, having to be traced through a Dutch-American source, but Daddy himself was never very clear on the subject, and did not think it of much consequence to him what or who his grandfather had been. He knew, at least, that he was the son of a pioneer, for he had helped his father to clear part of a poor farm on the River St. John, New Brunswick. Hard work it was getting the close spruce timber off, and raising a few oats—but for the lumbering to be had in that region they could not have lived. Corning's Mills, with all its disadvantages was a paradise to the banks of the St. John; its hardwood land could be cleared and crops worth the raising obtained from it. Simon Gates was therefore one of the most contented and prosperous of our early pioneers, well pleased with himself and his two hundred acres within a mile from the grist mill. This circumstance added to his experience of the woods and the life therein, although the conditions were not a little different from those to which he had been accustomed in his youth, accounts in some measure for the fact of his being found in possession of the same property on which he originally settled some thirty or forty years ago. For, unfortunately, it has to be admitted, not for the first time, that the pioneer is not always to be found on the lot which he originally occupied and cleared. It would seem that the qualities which constitute fitness for enduring the hardship and privation of roughing it in the bush, are not in every instance associated with those which give stability and success in a more advanced state of the country. Any one strong and "ignorant enough," as Daddy Gates used to say, can clear up land, and especially at this time of day. It was different forty years ago, when settlers were few and far between, when there were neither roads nor railways, when people had to grind their wheat in a coffee mill, and perhaps not see the inside of a store in two years. It is when the land is cleared up, and a new order of things commences, that the difficulty with a good many begins. However strange it may

seem, it is nevertheless a fact, that numbers of our pioneers, through sheer carelessness and ignorance, have doomed themselves to a fate similar to that which overtook the old emigrants from the banks of the Nile—to toil, but never to enter in!—to be near the fulfilment of their early dreams, and yet fail to realize the easy future to which their efforts have all been directed. It is one thing to clear land, and quite another to farm it afterwards. When the backwoodsman lays down his axe and takes to the plough, if he has not been preparing himself by study and observation for the change, very likely he will have to shoulder it again, move further back into the bush and hope for better luck next time, as not a few of our first settlers at Corning's Mills had been obliged to do. But such is pioneer life; and while in this aspect, it is to be regretted in its effects upon individuals and families, it eventually ministers to the general good, preparing the way, as it does, for others sure to follow, who with new life and better skill, soon begin to make things look different. Generally speaking, the pioneer of the unlucky stamp referred to, is a nomad by profession, and can hardly do any better, for his knowledge and experience are limited to the requirements of a very elementary state of existence. It has been maintained by some of our most prominent men that the native Canadian makes the only reliable pioneer, and that the immigrant who undertakes the task of settling down in the wilderness, without any knowledge of the country, or experience of the work he has to perform, runs a very great risk of failure. A few years ago, the question was incidentally discussed in our own parliament. Thomas D'Arcy McGee, at that time Minister of Agriculture and Emigration, upheld the argument in behalf of the immigrant, against the then Provincial Secretary, who was all for the native born backwoodsman, although, at the time, representing a county which had actually been opened up, and to a large extent settled, by Paisley weavers.

There is no question but the native, familiar with the ways of the country, inured to the climate, and accustomed to the use of the axe, has at the *first start* the advantage of the raw immigrant, but in the end, all depends upon the man. If the immigrant would only take time, and be content to learn for a while, he has nothing whatever to fear, and with all due deference to the opinions of our *quondam* Provincial Secretary, and others of the same belief, I hold that the immigrant is as likely to succeed, and accommodate himself to every change in the backwoods' life, as the native. At his first outset, however, he has no right to go in the

very van of settlement; he should be content to work his way to some such incipient village as the one I have been describing, which there is now any number in the back townships, and then taking hold of the first thing in the shape of work that offers itself wait patiently till his ideas have somewhat expanded.

But to proceed with our sketch: Simon Gates has been a successful pioneer, and is to be regarded as a fair type of his class. I might have selected a higher, but prefer that which approaches the average.

Paying him a visit, we come to the lane running off the road or concession line, as it is called, and away down the clearing like a main artery, into which the fields open at intervals by means of sliding bars resting on posts, and pour forth their contribution in hay time and harvest, to be conveyed to the common storehouse, a vast wooden barn standing in from the lane a little, and not far from the road first mentioned.

Entering the lane by a small side gate, hung on the same post which supports the main gate, we pass along, on the left, a neat picket fence, enclosing on this side the kitchen garden, famous all over the settlement for its currant bushes, cabbages, beets and onions. The more delicate tomatoes, mush-melons and citron have been tried, but as yet only with partial success, owing to the rather troublesome fall-frosts, although Daddy Gates, who is something of a gardener, thinks that as the climate improves or the clearing up and settlement of the country, he will be able to succeed.

At the farther end of this picket enclosure, stands the house, not the original one, for that was only a shanty, roofed with elm bark, answering well enough for two or three years at first, when the family was small. The present habitation is not a very wonderful improvement, and cannot be said to surpass the common run of first houses in an ordinary settlement of the present day. After all, it is not so bad looking, and with an occasional white-wash and a little plastering up of the "cracks" in the fall of the year, it may do the old people quite a while yet; although, ever since Steve Foster, and one or two other neighbours, have got their nice new "frames" up, the young Gates's are all the time teasing "Pap" about building, which year after year he has put off, waiting for better times.

As the house stands in from the lane some ten yards or so, we turn round the garden fence, where another similar fence commences, and is continued in front of the house for a little space,



then turning at right angles, joins that of the lane which is of the common zig-zag description. In the centre of this picket is a small gate opening upon a narrow plank footpath, extending to the verandah or "stoup," the more common Dutch name for it, which is a pavement about five feet wide, running along the front of the house, boarded in at both ends, as well as partly in front, thus forming, with the roof continued in a line with that covering the main building, an inclosure, in which, for want of a summer kitchen, stands the cooking stove in warm weather. The house itself, resting on the stone walls of an underground cellar, is built of logs, and measures 26 x 22 feet. The main apartment, opening from the stoup by a door right in the centre, occupies the whole area, all but a narrow stripe at one end, partitioned off into two very small bed-rooms. The garret above has never been fitted up in any way. It has a small window in each gable, and is lined lengthways on both sides with bedsteads like a small house of recovery. Here the sleepers next the wall have to be careful in rising to avoid unpleasant contact with the bare rafters, and here, on a wet night, when their "chores" are all done up, they may retire a little earlier to enjoy the rapture of "rain on the roof."

"Every tingle on the shingle  
Has an echo in the heart,  
And a thousand dreamy fancies  
Into busy being start,  
And a thousand recollections  
Weave their bright hues into woof,  
As we listen to the patter  
Of the soft rain on the roof."

Such is the simple mansion in which the Gates's have lived for more than twenty years. The rule that "the domestic circumstances of men, form a second physiognomy, which supplies a key to their character and destiny" holds good in their case at least—they are very plain people indeed. Knocking at the door, we are told to come in. Mrs. Gates, a benign old lady of few words, remarkable for their point and deliberation, thinks it unnecessary to rise from her knitting, in the large armed rocking chair, but, in a kindly way, bids us take a seat. "Help yourself" is the motto of the backwoods, so we don't feel the least awkward in hunting up a chair. There is an enormous log fire roaring up the chimney, and a cooking stove besides, standing like a family altar in the middle of the apartment. The stovepipe rising straight up, passes through a hole in the ceiling, then up through the garret,



and out by another hole in the ridge of the roof—no fear of spark setting fire to the house at this time of the year, for there is a good solid coating of snow on the shingles; but if Pap does not run the pipe into the chimney soon, there is no saying what may happen in the very dry weather, now that the shingles are so old.

We observe that Mrs. Gates and her two daughters, Mary Jane and Elizabeth Ann, are dressed in good substantial "Rob Roy," their own dyeing and spinning; twenty fleece, more or less, having been sent to the carding mill last summer, returning in "rolls" ready for the wheel, which was kept pretty busy for a month or two after harvest: the yarn was then dyed and sent to the weaver. Mrs. Gates prides herself on the quantity and quality of her home spun, and nothing better adapted to the climate or the occupation of the people could well be imagined—if they could only dye a little better, these old women, it would be hard to beat them in the manufacture of clothing. For ordinary wear, the men have jackets, or smocks and sometimes trousers made of the stuff as it comes from the loom, but for holiday use and travelling, their suits are made of cloth fullered and dressed at the mill where the carding was done.

Mary Jane is busy "getting the dinner." She is just emerging from a trap door in the floor of the room which, in winter, is the only entrance to the cellar, with a large plate in her hand heaped up with slices of very nice bacon, which, by dint of a good arm and a sharp butcher's knife, she has managed to cut from one of the hard fitches down in the cellar. The meat, after soaking a few minutes, first in hot, then in cold water, is put into the capacious frying-pan. A furious sputter ensues; but let no one imagine that his olfactory nerves as he sits beside the cooking stove will be propitiated with anything like an apology. Coming in from the keen January air, he does not feel it at all necessary all that the case demands is a little more exertion of the lungs in speaking.

A stranger would be likely to declare that the Canadian backwoodsman was dreadfully porkivorous. The Gates's, on an average, must have ate six fat hogs annually, say for the last twenty years; but then there are seven of them, and we have to take into account the "bees," chopping, logging, quilting, woolpicking and threshing, besides the extra hands in haying and harvest. It is in winter that the greatest quantity of pork is consumed, and people may say what they like about the pig, but let them swing the axe for nine hours a day, inhaling the pure oxygen of the woods

at a temperature twenty degrees below zero, and if their lungs can stand the internal combustion without the carbon of fat pork for fuel, they have a good right to speak. It must not be supposed, however, that it is pig and nothing but pig all the year round; on the contrary, beef and mutton are by no means rare, besides almost everyone has a flock of geese and turkeys (ducks are not so common) but there is no end to chickens.

While Mary Ann is at the door, blowing the long tin-horn to call the men to dinner, let us take a look at the bill of fare.

In the centre of the table, which is covered with tolerable linen, stands the dish of fried bacon, along with another, containing an immense "chunk" of the same meat boiled and cold—the potatoes are drying in the oven and will not be put on the table till the men sit down. Even at dinner, we fail not to observe the everlasting cups and saucers—swills of young Hyson, generally without sugar, forming part of every meal, doubtless, with so much fat pork, it is found to be a better solvent than cold water. Then there is an abundance of good homebaked bread, one or two varieties of cake, a pumpkin-pie, "apple sass" seasoned with allspice, pickled beets and a raw onion or two.

The thrifty Canadian housewife has always a reserve of dried fruit for winter use. Wild strawberries, raspberries and other small fruit grow in prodigious quantities in every old clearing, fence-corner, or wherever there is an open space not otherwise occupied. These are gathered in their proper season, generally by the young folks, and when dried in the sun on boards, or in the oven in pans, are carefully laid past in jars. All they require to prepare them for the table is a little sugar and boiling water. Other larger fruits, and some vegetables, pumpkins for instance, are dried in a similar way.

But here are the men, Pap, and his three sons, named respectively, Pete, Hen. and Gust., or duly, Peter, Henry and Augustus. Pap has a thoughtful look in his face, and is now a little stooped in the shoulders, for "he has seen some hard times, has Pap." The boys are fine, brawny sensible looking fellows, in the prime of their youth and strength, free and erect, not afraid to look you straight in the face. They have been in the bush since morning chopping, and so every day for the last two months, for they are going to add ten acres to the clearing this next spring. We shall see them at work in a little.

Shortly after dinner, of which we have been cordially invited to partake, we are brought to see the barn and barnyard on the

other side of the lane, and down from the house a little. The barn like the house, stands in from the lane a few yards, to allow the teams to turn, and the gin of the threshing machine to operate. It is an enormous frame building, 66 x 46 feet and 25 feet from floor to ridge. In the side, are two great folding doors, admitting the largest loads of hay and grain, for everything is housed if possible. We enter upon the floor, which is some 20 feet wide, roomy enough to hold the threshing machine when it comes round and to admit of a little handwork if required for an early grist, or any odd job. To the right of the floor, is the "mow," occupying three-fifths of the whole building, from basement to ceiling, and capable of holding a whole harvest. Here the wheat in the sheaf is stowed. Oats, barley and buckwheat are piled on the loft above the floor. On the left, opposite the mow, are the granaries six in number, each with a capacity for holding 150 bushels. Next to the granaries, and at the end of the building, is a very commodious horse stable, with four double stalls, and two single ones; the principal entrance is from the barnyard but there is also a narrow passage communicating with the floor. Above both stable and granaries, is the hay loft, extending to the ceiling, with an opening above the rack of each stall. Doors similar to those by which we first entered, and directly opposite, open into the barnyard, so that the teams hauling in grain or hay, enter at one side and pass out at the other.

The frame barn, of which the above is an ordinary type, is not often the first in use by the settler. For a few years at first he has to be content with one built of logs, not quite so large, and generally wanting both the stable and the granaries, but otherwise the same in construction; all the outlay required being merely for the shingles, nails, and a few hundred feet of lumber. It is always within the reach of the poorest settler, who has only to cut the logs and haul them together, the neighbours never refusing to give him half a day to raise it. The frame barn is a different matter and can never be undertaken without a little means. It has to be "laid out" by a regular framer who gets about a dollar and a half a day with board, or is paid so much for the job. But the farmer himself, with good assistance at home, can do a great part of it himself, nearly all in fact, after the frame is once up. He may take his logs to the mill and trade them for sawn lumber; he may even make his own shingles, and then have only the nails to buy. Some commence their preparations two years or so before raising, and in this way do not feel the burden.



We now pass into the barn-yard, enclosed on one side by the barn just described. Two other sides are likewise enclosed by buildings cornering at right angles with the barn, one of them being a long cattle-shed with a hay-loft above, having two or three dumb windows on the inside for throwing out feed to the cattle, the other being the old barn and stable, now used as a retreat by the cattle and sheep, which have no other protection from the storms of winter. The side looking to the south is only partly enclosed by what remains of an immense straw stack, piled up on a frame of logs at the threshing last fall. This straw, along with a bottle of hay morning and evening, a handful of salt now and then, with plenty of pure sweet spring water from the creek hard by, is all that Mr. Gates allows his cattle in winter. There are many warm nooks and corners about such a barn-yard, no doubt, but it may well be supposed that even bovine patience gets tired of it before the long winter is over, and that even the "leeks" a week or two after the snow melts, are a welcome sight after five months' "storm feeding." The sheep and pigs have the pea-straw in addition, which is not too carefully threshed; the former nibble away at the leaves, the latter pick out the last pea in the heap, and then build a nest with the straw, all in tolerable good humour until it comes to the point of deciding which have to lie outside.

With the exception of the horses, Mr. Gates's stock is very little better than storm fed. He has an idea, very common in the backwoods, that it makes the cattle hardy when they have to winter out. But see the poor animals in the Spring, you can count every bone in their body, and it is far on in the summer before they begin to look like themselves. The settler often loses a whole year by his oxen "giving out" in the Spring, from not being sheltered and cared for during the winter.

Our friend Gates' stock includes some six or seven cows, three or four heifers, a yoke of oxen well broken in, some young steers that will soon be able to work, two span of horses, two or three colts, some twenty or thirty sheep, and any quantity of pigs and poultry. In every instance, however, the breed is inferior, for no attempt has ever been made to improve it. Mr. Gates is not one of your model farmers; his motto is to "git along" in a tolerable way. He has never got the length of a root-house yet, and he could easily have spared a few acres for root crops, but this year he had only a small turnip patch, and about three quarters of an acre of potatoes. The turnips never were lifted, for, when the feed got scarce in the Fall, the cattle were turned into the field, and before the crop was



half used the frost set in. The potatoes were pitted in the field where they grew, away at the end of the clearing, and when the few that were first brought home to the kitchen cellar were used, the family had to do without them till the pits could be opened. The prudent farmer sets a high value on his root-house, and, by having it well stocked in the Fall, provided he has anything like good stable accommodation, he need not be afraid of the hardest winter, besides with very little extra trouble he may have some beef cattle fattened for the Spring market.

Some have their root-houses under the barn in the form of an underground cellar, with stone walls, on which the whole building rests. This is a very good plan. Others excavate the side of a knoll or embankment, where the land near the stable affords the like; but Mr. Gates, although his buildings were situate on an elevation, shelving off towards a creek which ran through his property, and every way adapted for such a purpose, had either never thought of it or set it down as one of those things that "don't pay"—a common saying in the backwoods—but very often used in ignorance, and to cloak a want of spirit and enterprise.

By the way, one of the finest things on the Gates's property was the never failing spring creek above alluded to, running through the whole of the clearing, as well as the rear bush part of the lot. It was a "bonnie burn," ever crooning to the cedars that dipped their fingers in its pearly waters, and might have been a great deal more to its owners than "a fine thing for cattle." One would have almost imagined that they bore a sort of grudge against it. Had it been content with anything like reasonable bounds or walked peaceably along in a straight line, there might have been less said, but like a young romp it would have its own way, regardless of how much land it broke up in its frolics. This was nothing, however, to one of its cantrips, for just as it cleared the back hundred, a short distance from the rear concession line, it jumped laughing over a precipice twenty feet high, turning the water-wheel of a small carding and fulling mill, the rent of which built Steve Foster's frame house and helped to pay for the land.

The barn and barn-yard are all the sights about the place at this time of the year, unless we go down to the fallow with the boys and see the chopping. They are well on with their ten acres, so we can have an idea of what they have been doing during the last two months; and it will be worth while to see them handle the axe, for they can do it to perfection.

As we get to about the end of the clearing, we notice that the

land rises into little rounded knolls, and on approaching the fallow from the lane, the creek which has hitherto pursued a very devious course, is observed to split into two, as if to clasp in its embrace one of the largest knolls, which it does so completely as to form a perfect island, the scene of the winter's chopping—now however only a few trees are left standing along the side next the road; the rest of the timber lies strewn around apparently in the utmost confusion, among heaps of brush and small limbs; but the initiated would not fail to observe a certain method in the midst of all the disorder, for the experienced chopper having always a good notion of the conditions essential to a first-rate "burn," lays his timber accordingly. The brush heaps are piled with the same end in view. Forest trees, from being so close together, do not branch out on the stems, but make amends, in the abundant ramification of the top, where there is no restraint. On being chopped, they come to the ground with tremendous force, when the trunk is cut into convenient lengths for logging, and the top which is often smashed to pieces in the fall, is dressed, that is, the unbroken limbs and stumps of limbs, are cut off, and with the loose fragments lying around are piled close together, so as to burn well.

Having disposed of the few small hemlocks along the stream, there is nothing left standing on the island but the stumps, and one enormous rock elm right in the centre, left to the last, in expectation perhaps that, when deprived of the support and shelter of its neighbours, some vigorous nor-wester might be kind enough to take it down, and save two or three hours' hard work chopping, for the monster is fully five feet at the butt.

"Since he has stood so long, why not let him alone, to ornament the island?"

But the boys know better.

"He's got to come down, and if he don't come now he may when we don't want him."

"I guess" says another of the boys, "he wont be no great job neither, for I bet you he's as hollow's a drum," So, agreeing where he is to "lay," they set themselves to chop it down, one opposite the other on the same side, and so, one right and the other left handed. It is soon seen that Gust was not far wrong in his estimate—fair and stately as the giant seemed outside, he was as rotten as a mushroom at the core. There is still a good shell of wood however, sufficient to keep the axes going a good half hour at least, no! not so long, the leviathan leans a little atop, and needs all his rind to keep him perpendicular; suddenly the choppers

cease, certain sure signs, plain enough to them, betoken the end; still there is no hurry the boys have calculated where he is to "lay," and retire leisurely from the butt to enjoy the sight, for it is a sight, even to the backwoodsman accustomed to it. How calmly he bends his lordly head, down! down! the mighty has fallen! what a crash! Broken in the back, shivered in every limb, his plunge in the fallow has tossed up a thick spray of brush high into the air. Gust remarks, with some philosophy, that it is "much easier to take a tree down than to put one up."

There is not a great deal of danger from the falling of the trees in an ordinary way, as there is always time to get away from the butt to a safe distance, but one has to be careful of loose limbs dropping down from above. A certain excitement attaches to chopping which does not belong to ordinary dull labour, and consequently a good axeman prefers it to almost any other kind of work, in the winter at least. It is too warm work for summer, otherwise it would be the better time, as the wood is much softer, and the foliage although it would greatly obstruct the chopper, would be of considerable service in burning up the loose stuff preparatory to logging. A good hand will often cut an acre in a week, and earn from six to seven dollars with board, but, as before mentioned, it is more usual to have the chopping done by contract.

"Forest management," in some older countries, is reduced to a system, in which the policy is strictly Conservative, but with us in the backwoods, and indeed through nearly the whole of Canada, it consists in stupid extermination. The doom of every standing stick with the exception of the sugar-bush, and the cordwood reserve, is to be cut down and cast into the fire. A stranger is struck with the monotonous appearance of the country, walking along a concession line, not a tree relieves the eye except the uniform belt of woods in the rear of the clearings. How much better it would be to have the house and outbuildings surrounded by a grove, as well as a few trees scattered over the fields or in the fence corners, which would not only be an ornament to the landscape, but serve as a screen from the scorching heat of summer, and a wind-break to the cold sweeping blasts of winter.

If there was not a difficulty in the way of reserving odd timber here and there, the wholesale system of destruction practiced, would indicate an amount of ignorance and bad taste truly lamentable, but there is a difficulty, and the poor settler, struggling to make a living, has very little inclination to grapple with



t. In the first place, only a few forest trees, when left standing alone, will bear exposure to any strong blast of wind, unless they have had time to take firmer hold of the ground, which will not be until after they have had a few shakings in their unprotected state.

Then, in order to reserve a clump or grove, the greatest care has to be taken to prevent the fire getting near it; the leaves and the brush have all to be removed to a distance, and the fallow burned in patches, which involves much additional labour, for it is a great object to get a "good burn," and the driest time, with a favourable wind being chosen, there is often a perfect tornado of fire, which picks up everything except the heavy logs.

But the difficulty ought to be nothing to one who is in any position at all to grapple with it. He might proceed in this way: Commencing midway on the front of his lot, let him open up a lane of two or three hundred yards in length by fifteen in breadth; at a convenient point on one side, where he intends to build his house, let him thin out the trees less capable of becoming shady and ornamental, to any extent he may think proper, the same on the other side where he intends to raise the barn and stables; also, along both sides of the lane, from its commencement on the road, let him thin out in the same way a strip of some ten or twelve yards in width. And now he is to proceed with his regular chopping. Commencing at the front, on one side of the lane, he cuts everything clean down to the thinned out portion where the house is to stand, making a field of say, five acres. If he can manage to have the same thing done on the other side of the lane all the better. Let him now watch his opportunity, and burn the brush heaps in both fallows, selecting not too dry a time. This done, he must go to work and remove the brush heaps from the lane and the thinned out portions into the fallows on each side, where there will now be more room to move about. A second fire completes the burning up of the loose stuff. The next operation will be the logging and burning of the heavy timber in each of the fallows, including that of the lane and the thinnings, which must be hauled out.

In this way, throughout the whole clearing, there might be reserves for shade and ornamental trees, and the lane, with its sheltering belt of woods, might be extended to the rear of the lot. In a few years it would be a delightful avenue.

Mr. Gates's lot is a two hundred acre one, and when this winter's chopping is through, he will have 120 acres of a clearing; 50 acres



of the balance, fronting the concession in the rear, now belong to one of the boys, who has a small clearing on it. He is going to put a house up, and get some one to keep it for him soon. Pap will not clear any more on his side for some time to come, indeed he has more land now than he can attend to. Towards the front the fields are entirely free of stumps, and in a few years there will be 100 acres in a stretch, having the appearance of an old farm. One would think that having no debts to speak of, no rent to pay, Pap might be a rich man; but rich man and poor farmer don't usually go together. Our friend has been in the habit of treating his land much in the same way as he treats his cattle, takes all he can get, and gives as little as he can. That fields as well as cattle require to be fed, and their food regulated to their wants and uses, savours too much of book-farming to have much weight with Pap. Another man with the same industry, and a little more chemistry, could hardly help making a small fortune on such a farm.

"February fill the dyke," is a true proverb in Canada. The last of the winter months with us, it is perhaps not so cold as January, but is more stormy as a general thing. The snow has gathered to a depth of from two to three feet on the level, and what now falls is mostly drifted, filling up the numerous lanes, and sometimes the main roads fence high. Chopping is carried on at a great disadvantage. In fact, from the beginning of the month, on till sugar-making, there is not much out-door work done in the back townships. The settler who is just commencing operations, and has to do all his own chopping and clearing up, will have as much of a fallow cut as he can well attend to in the Spring and fore part of the Summer. He has leisure now, if he has the ingenuity to do a great many little jobs by the fire-side that will save both time and money afterwards. The man who has worked himself into easier circumstances, will now think nothing of making a trip to the city, or on a visit to some distant part of the country. He may take his team with a light load of dressed hogs, or his cutter and favorite trotter. Nothing he prides himself in more than his mare's mettle. Wrapped in buffalo-robe, with fur cap and gauntlet mits, riding ten miles an hour, what is winter to him but the perfection of enjoyment?

"O, swift we go o'er the fleecy snow,  
When moonbeams sparkle round,  
When hoofs keep time to music's chime  
As merily on we bound."

Now is the time for visiting, merry-making, protracted meetings,

magic-lantern exhibitions, phrenological and temperance lectures. Scarcely a night but there is something going on at the school-house. The trustees are very good natured, and make no objections, but the teacher next morning is not so well pleased with the state of affairs.

Such is the round of life on through February, and now people begin their preparations for sugar-making.

Pap has just lighted the fires on a fine March morning, and stepped out to the barn-yard to look at the cattle and give them a bottle of hay and a handful of salt, of which they are very fond at this time of the year. The boys are putting on their boots at the stove in the kitchen.

"Is Pap a-going to hunt up them old sap troughs to-day, I wonder?"

"I guess—I'm a-going to the swamp for a stick to make spiles."

"They ain't none of them sap troughs worth the picking up, 'laying' there all summer. I wish Pap would buy a lot of them cedar buckets, we'd have to look after them, I guess."

Here Pap himself comes in, and orders Gust and Pete to gather as many troughs as they can find, and get them washed out. Then he is to hitch up the old span, take the bob-sleigh, and bring home a good cedar, along with a number of basswood logs, lying at the rear of the lot. They have no black ash on their land, so they will have to do with basswood to make their troughs. It has the advantage of being easily wrought, but being very porous, the inside of the trough is sometimes charred to make it hold in, which tells however upon the colour of the sugar.

It is very stupid of Pap not to look after his troughs a little better. He might have brought them home to the barn or piled them under cover in the bush, which would have been easier a great deal than making new ones, or hunting the old ones among the snow after their being kicked and tumbled about all summer.

Some who go into the sugar business in earnest have a stock of small hooped cedar or pine buckets, which, at wholesale, are not so very expensive, and will last a life-time if regularly brought home and piled away out of the sun as soon as sugar-making is over. They keep the sap clean, and that improves the colour of the sugar. But the best sap-holders are made of tin; they are very handy, can easily be kept clean, and do not cost so much after all.

Every year Pap had to make some scores of the old fashioned kind. But as he was wont to remark, "What's the odds a man makin' a few troughs when he kin do nothing else." The logs

selected for the purpose are usually a foot in diameter. They are cut into lengths of about two feet; each cut is split into two and then hollowed out with the axe. The Gates's, all hands at work will make three or four score of them in a couple of days. Looking in at the barn, where they are busy at them, we observe two of the boys sawing the logs into proper lengths with the large cross-cut saw. Pap is splitting the cuts, and Hen is working at the spiles. He has a block of cedar about a foot in length from which he is slivering off pieces with an instrument made for the purpose, and resembling a large gouge, which leaves its curve at the end; the rest of the sliver takes more or less of the groove, making it a good channel for the sap to run into the trough lying at the root of the tree.

Mr. Gates expects to tap in a day or two. It might not do to begin on the first fine day; there must be some reliable indication of a spell of the right weather—clear sunshine, with a light wind after a night's moderate frost—hit that and you will have a glorious run.

The omens being considered favourable, Pap sets out in the morning with his axe and dexterously cuts a "nick" about an inch deep in the butt of each maple. Hen follows with the spiles, which he fixes in the tree just below the nick, first driving in the gouge to make way for them; a trough is then placed under the drop and the tapping process is completed. It is a very barbarous one and the trees cannot stand it long. A hole three quarters of an inch deep, made with an inch auger, would be just as good a tap, and if plugged up with clay, after sugar-making, would heal completely up, and the tree be none the worse.

If it happens to be the right kind of sugar-weather the sap will hardly take time to drop, there will be a tiny stream from noon till nearly dark, and the troughs will need to be emptied. Mary Jane and her sister will have to be at hand to carry the sap to the store-trough, a huge vessel standing beside the boilers, and resembling a large canoe, being the hollowed out trunk of a monstrous black ash, brought with much ado from the swale away on another concession. Carrying the sap is pretty hard work in the deep snow, for the sugar bush extends a good way all around the store-trough and has never been cleared up, so that a sleigh could move about and make the collections. But the girls make no complaints, and never take cold although their boots are often full of snow.

If to-morrow's run promises fair the boys will have the fire started and the kettles hung betimes in the morning. The fire is built



against a "back log," which is renewed as often as required. The kettles hold from ten to twenty gallons, and are hung from the handles on hooks suspended from a cross beam resting on two forked sticks. The boiling now commences and goes on all day, fresh sap being constantly added in small quantities. One sees that it does not boil over, another chops wood for the fire, and the girls see to collecting and carrying the sap to the store-trough. Towards evening, they allow it to boil down to syrup, when it is taken off, cooled and strained. It is now in the form of molasses. Maple molasses! the most delicious syrup in the world, not excepting the heather honey itself. To make sugar the syrup has to be boiled down till it answers the test, that is, till it *breaks* when spread on the snow.

Before leaving the bush this second night, the boys have boiled down the most of the two day's run and "sugared-off" besides, taking home with them seventy or eighty pounds of good brown sugar, and a pailful of molasses. If they can go on at this rate for other eight or ten days there will be no lack of "sweetening" for one year at least. What a treasure to the housewife, a twenty gallon keg of the rich amber juice, stowed away in a corner of the cellar, where it will keep fresh and cool through all the heat of next summer, and though after harvest it may be getting a little scarce, there will always be a saucerful on the table, with buckwheat cakes, when she has anyone to tea whom she delights to honour.

Although sugar-making is rather a profitable speculation, if gone into properly, Pap, having once seen the young folks fairly started takes no more ado with it, knowing pretty well that, at certain times, his company might not be very desirable. There are always lots of boys and girls, either not in the business themselves, or, if so, anxious to know how their neighbours are getting on, who think nothing of a long walk or ride, on a moonlight night, to the sugar bush. Of course, they always happen to be there at the "sugaring-off," which winds up the day's performance. It might be too much to affirm that sugar, however highly relished on this side the Atlantic, is the only attraction at these gatherings, unless we have to charge Young Canada with insensibility to the charms of pretty girls, and the romance of the moonlight hour, under the shade of majestic trees aglare with the red light of far blazing fires. Surely there must be some approach to sentiment in scenes and circumstances like these.

No doubt Pap is very much pleased at the result of the operations in the sugar bush this season, but he has had his attention



fully engaged in the barn-yard among the cattle and sheep. The increase in the stock has been large, nearly all the ewes have had twins, and most of them have been preserved. Along with the good sugar harvest, this is encouraging to begin the year with. He is now all alive to the importance of getting a good start with the Spring work, of which the Canadian farmer has so much to do, and so little time to do it. We find him, therefore, busy overhauling the ploughs and harrows, cleaning his seed wheat, and fixing up his harness, subject to considerable tear and wear in a new country. Time permitting, he intends to cross-plough all the land he went over in the Fall, and to break up a ten acre field chopped some eight years ago, and seeded down in grass along with the first crop of spring wheat. The stumps, being all hardwood, are now pretty soft, and he expects to be able to clean it out entirely during the summer, so as to be ready in September for fall wheat. Then he has to log and burn the ten acre fallow where the boys have been chopping the most of the winter; no small job of itself, but he intends having a "bee" and thus put the whole thing through in a week or so.

There has been no rain to speak of this Spring, and the thaw has been very gradual; but now, about the end of sugar-making, the hill-tops begin to look bare and the roads are breaking up; the snow, soiled with dust and travel, looks very unlike that "saintly veil of maiden white" which five months ago came down to cover the muddy roads and hide from our weary sight the withered leaves and faded flowers. The sleigh-bell's "runic rhyme" and merry "tintinabulation" which filled the icy air of the Christmas moonlight is changed to tuneless clangor. In fact, we are sick and tired of the whole thing. O! to hear once more the notes of the robin and bluebird, or even the bullfrog's humble song in the marsh.

It is Sunday, at noon, and the young Gates's, along with a number of other young men, are on the way home from meeting.

"I say, if we don't hurry up we won't have many more sleigh rides this season, 'I guess.'"

That's so.

Let's all go to the Corners this evening, their holding protracted meeting there, I guess. Pap will let us have the colts, I know he will, and, continues Gust, "let us take the girls along, and have a jolly good sleigh ride if it is the last."

This proposal, having met with general approbation, they all agree to start at five o'clock, the Gates's to furnish one team, and the McKee's another,

The "Corners," where the protracted meeting was going on, was a place some six or seven miles distant. The intersection of concession lines with side-lines, at intervals of from two to three miles, forms, all over a township, what are called Corners. In a rising settlement it is an object to have one of the corner lots, for the owner has the advantage of a road on two sides, and if the place should happen to grow to any importance, it will be here it will begin, and in the usual way, with a tavern, a blacksmith's shop, and so on. At the Corners referred to, not only were these signs of growth manifest, but several one acre lots had been taken up and built upon. There was also a large school house which, as in most new settlements, was used as a place of worship. The various Methodist denominations had held "protracted meetings" in it during the winter, each in turn. The one going on at present was conducted by the "Noo Connexion," a body which **had** only recently sought representation in this part of the country, and having, as yet, only a limited influence, had been obliged to content itself with the privilege of the school house on Sunday, and other evenings, after the Wesleyans, the Primitives, and the Episcopalians were done with it. The "effort" which had been inaugurated only a week or two ago, was therefore a little out of season, and would soon have to come to an end, owing to the state of the roads. Indeed, this was understood to be the last night. The "Noo Connexion" could hardly be said to have made much head-way at the Corners. Its apostle, having been rather injudiciously selected, never acquired any popularity. His "appointment" was every alternate Sunday, in the middle of the day, but having managed to obtain the use of the school house for a few nights, he did his best to provoke a revival, but the more immediate residents of the place, kept sullenly aloof, and looked upon the whole thing in a very anti-noo connexion light indeed. The preacher got discouraged and left. "A more gospel-hardened set he had never come across." His successor, a Mr. Baskerton, had more hope, and manfully resolved that the "appointment" should not be abandoned. Having made his appearance as a Sunday evening lecturer, during a short interregnum of the Primitives, and at a time when the roads were good, he commanded large audiences. Encouraged thus to persevere, he waited his opportunity, and at length announced his intention of making a protracted effort before the roads broke up.

Exactly at five o'clock, Gust has the colts hitched up, and the buffalo-ropes in the sleigh, "All aboard" is the signal, the girls jump in, and away they go. At the Bell's and the Austin's they

pick up other two girls, and now the Gates's party consists of eight a sufficient load in the present state of the roads, which, in the clearings, especially on the south slopes, are nearly bare, McKee's team is a little way ahead. The girls anxiously remind Gust of several places where he will have to be careful with his skittish colts. The School hill is one of them. It is rather a steep one, and at the foot the road narrows considerably, winding round the face of a hill on one side, with a somewhat formidable hollow or gully on the other, now well filled with drifted snow. Loaded team coming down the hill, and slackening pace too soon, had often swung around, and even been known to tip over at the entrance to this narrow passage. In fact the school hill had such a bad reputation that the girls knowing Gust's Jehuistic propensities, made it conditional upon their going, that he should stop when they came to it, and allow them to walk over; but Gust had no intention of keeping his word. On they went full speed till they reached the slope, which from being hard packed with the children sliding down on boards and little hand sleighs, was one sheet of ice, and the horses' feet—not now so sharp as they had been, the descent was anything but agreeable. For Gust to stop, or the girls to jump out was now impossible. Since noon, a mass of snow had fallen from the embankment above where the road began to narrow, obstructing the passage, the other team had got safely over it, but the colts, on coming up to the heap stood stock still all of a sudden, round went the sleigh, and out poured the whole freight down the sides of the gully. Fortunately Gust stuck to the lines, and before the sleigh had time to tip completely over, put the whip on, and was right in a minute.

An upset in the snow is seldom attended with very serious consequences, all the harm done in this case was to the girls' caps and ribbons, which being set to rights with far more laughing than lamentation, the journey was resumed.

The most of the way now led through the bush where the sleighing was tolerably good. Here they enjoyed themselves singing the common camp-meeting hymns "I'm a pilgrin," "I love Jesus," "Happy day," &c., &c. Thus without any new adventure they arrived in due time at the Corners, and tying up the horses in the shed adjoining the school-house, putting a blanket on each, and throwing them some hay, the whole party entered and took seats. Mr. Baskerton was just giving out the first hymn.

"Come holy Spirit heavenly dove  
With all thy quick'ning powers."



The whole hymn was read with a running commentary or exhortation, "Let no heart be steeled against divine impressions this night; it might be the last opportunity some of them would have. The Spirit would be here in great power, he had prayed, his brethren had prayed, and something whispered to his heart that the answer would come. Hitherto he had been trusting too much to his own efforts, but to-night, all his trust would be in the salvation of God."

After singing the hymn, in which the congregation joined, there was the usual prayer and reading of the Scriptures; then another hymn, and the preacher announced his subject—*The Prodigal Son*.

"It was an old story he had just read, but the thing itself was ever new. There were prodigals now, as well as then. He knew of one that was present at this very meeting—would they like to be told his history? It was this. He was the son of godly parents, but took to bad company and the ways of unrighteousness. At length he left his home and his father's house, and came to the land of the stranger. All restraint being now withdrawn, he abandoned himself to riot and excess. But the eye of Omnipotence was watching over him, his mother's prayers and tears were not forgotten. He got religion where other young prodigals might get it, if they had a mind—just at such a meeting as the present where he had gone to scoff, but remained to tremble and to pray." It came out in the end that the preacher was merely giving his own experience. In this way was the "Prodigal Son" illustrated; but the Methodists do not count much on preaching at protracted meetings, the main dependence being placed on the machinery of the "Penitent Bench" to which an immediate resort was now made. "Brother Bawkins," a lay instrument, is asked to "lead in prayer," which he does at the utmost pitch of his voice, the preacher stands by his side, and calls out in quite a business style—"Come forward friends! Still there is room," or slapping the lay brother on the back, tells him not to "give in." "Pray on brother Bawkins, bring him down, down through the roof, I'll pay for the shingles."

But it is up-hill work. These dull Cornerites would not be moved. In fact, the most of them were young people, and they had all the time been talking to one another, as indifferent to what was going on, as they well could be. Gust, who was sitting along with his party, sometimes listening, but oftener talking, like the rest, now rises, and slowly pushing his way through the crowd, makes for the door, but gets pulled up by the preacher in the fol-



lowing manner. "I see a young man turning a deaf ear to the voice of warning. I say, young man, take the trouble to count your steps as you leave this place, and when you have numbered ten, say to yourself, 'I'm ten steps nearer hell.'"

There was something almost maledictory in the tone in which this was spoken, so that its effect upon Gust was anything but what the preacher intended. Smarting under the stroke, which had been so palpable and, as he thought, undeserved, for he was only going out for a moment to look at the horses, he turned round to where he had left his friends, and almost shouted that he was "a-going," upon which they all rose up and left the meeting. In a few minutes they were in their seats in the sleigh, and if Mr. Baskerton had been listening to the conversation which enlivened the journey homeward it might have been a lesson to him in the management of future protracted meetings.

It is far from my intention to speak disrespectfully of the Methodists, or their mission in the back townships. They are a great body, and their agents are of every degree of intelligence, and fitness for the difficult work they have to do. Of course it is not to be expected that they will send their best men among the humble settlers of the back townships; and yet it would be well that they did so occasionally, if only to correct the mistakes of weaker and less discreet brethren. The effect upon children and young people of such demonstrations as the above is anything but hopeful. Brought up in the atmosphere of protracted meetings, which they never fail to attend, hearing and seeing all that goes on and contrasting it with the reality of actual life, there is often a great temptation to make a profane travesty of the whole thing.

The Methodists are the pioneers of Christianity, but as the country gets settled up, other denominations come in. The Canada Presbyterian Church, in affinity with the Free Church of Scotland, is now well represented in the back townships, but seldom enters the field on mere speculation, requiring of its adherents a certain guarantee of support, in which case it sends a student during the summer; and if by his exertions a congregation is formed, there will be in due time a resident pastor.

At length the snow has all disappeared, not as in the case of a sudden thaw, leaving the sod bleached white, the rivers full, and the roads knee-deep in mud and slush—the sun, the chief agent this year in bringing about the Spring, has done the work gradually. Operations in the sugar bush have come to an end, for the sap, if it still continues to drop a little, flavors of the life of the tree,

and is useless except perhaps for vinegar, which, by the way, is an article of no small consideration in the *cuisine* of the Canadian housewife, who has always such lots of beets and onions to pickle, not to speak of the small fruits she has to preserve, which, with vinegar and spices, do not require anything like the quantity of sugar used in the ordinary way, and are nevertheless so good.

“Now—from the stately elms we hear  
The Blue Bird prophesying Spring.”

The Robin too, best known bird of the Canadian woods, is beginning, a little clumsily at first, to try his scales. Add to these, the Chickadee and the “Canary,” one or two Thrushes, several species of Woodpeckers, the Blue Jay and the Whip-poor-will, and the list of Canadian birds that will at first attract the ordinary settler is completed. They are all favourites, but I can stop to describe only one or two.

Blue Bobbie makes his appearance on the first approach to genial weather, often before the snow disappears. A cold “snap” of a day or two, may drive him back to the shelter of a deep glen, only to reappear in better spirits when the storm is over. His whole upper surface is a rich azure with purple reflections, excepting the shaft feathers of the wing and tail, which are jetty black, contrasting beautifully with the blue. The breast and belly are of a reddish hue ending in white at the abdomen. The hen has similar tints, but not so bright. Blue Bobbie lives on caterpillars, worms and spiders, of which he devours great numbers, thus earning his right to a few cherries in the fall, although there are those that grudge him the treat.

We have a whole tribe of Thrushes, of which the best known are the Song-Thrush and the Robin, so called, very unlike his unguacious little namesake at home, all the resemblance being his red breast, and a certain confidence in himself which brings him nearer the dwellings of man than most other birds. He is a true thrush however, and sings a very sweet artless song, some of the notes not unlike those of the Song-Thrush. He is one of the earliest warblers in Spring. The nest, plastered inside with mud, with five pretty green eggs, is often built in the orchards. In size, he is three times larger than his old country namesake. Every boy knows his yellow bill, ashy brown back, black wings, edged with ash, and the deep orange colour of his breast. He too professes to live on worms and caterpillars, but some people think he is altogether too fond of cherries. That eminent philosopher,

Josh Billings, who appears to have suffered from his depredations, speaks of him in these terms:

"The red-brestid robbing is a burd muchly doted onto by seminairy girls and poits.

"Gentlemen farmers also encurrige the robbing because he swallers insex when he can't get sno nor northing else to eat.

"But practickle farmers and fruit growists begin to don't see it

"I was onct a gentleman farmist.

"I am not so gentle as I was,

"I go in for real farming, making my pile of manoor, and raising things to eat.

"I used to listen for the robbing's lay and his evening carrol but I found out that he singed only to seduce femail robbings; and that where he et 5 insex he et quarts of cherries, strawberries, currants, rastberries, and ceterer, and then pitched into the melleres bartlett pairs.

"I found that my fruit crop agreed too well with Mr. robbing's crop.

"He's wobbling to his femail friends at evening—did not pay for his gobbling choice fruit all day.

"And so my friends when the swete red-brest gets fat on the eggspensif products of northern gardings and flocks southward to fill unsentimental pot pies I bid him adoo without regret."

Mr. Billings here refers to the melancholy fate which awaits numbers of the pretty thieves when they leave their northern home for a winter in the south. It seems they are very fond of the berries of a tree called the Pride of India, which is extensively cultivated for ornament and shade in some parts of Georgia and Florida. Its fruit has such an intoxicating effect upon them that they can neither fly nor sit upon the branches, but fall down quite helpless, in which state the coloured people gather them in large quantities and make them into pot-pies which they esteem a very savory dish. If left alone, it appears, they soon get all right again, but unfortunately, like too many of a superior order of existence, they do not learn wisdom by experience.

The fields ploughed in the Fall are now working off the frost; the soil heaves up like yeast, and the clods melt into jelly—too soon to put the plough in yet; a few days' drying, however, will greatly change the look of things, except in those fields where the surface water has no other way of getting off but by the slow process of evaporation. It had often been suggested to Mr. Gates that a good ditch or two on some part of his land would be of service,



but until last year he had dispensed not only with drainage of this, or any other sort, but also with spring ploughing to any great extent, his usual practice being to harrow in the seed where he had ploughed in the Fall; this year, however, having adopted a system of drainage sufficient to carry off the surface water at least, he was prepared to give some of his fields a going over again before seeding.

Nothing can be done in the fallow for more than a month yet; it is all ready for the match, but it must first be in a condition to burn. It will also be a week or two before they can touch the stumps in the ten-acre field which Pap intends to clear up and plough for fall wheat this summer; the frost lingers long about the roots, holding them down with the rigour of iron, but once out, the stumping can be done to advantage after the expansion and subsequent upheaval. Ploughing will therefore be the first regular work they can go at; they have two good horse teams now, as well as a yoke of oxen. The boys do not like to handle the latter in the plough, so that Pap himself will have to take them; but he is well accustomed to their slow gait, and remembers when he had nothing else, either for the plough or the harrow. The man who has to make his living out of his land from the commencement, cannot afford, like the Raymonds, to seed it down for six or seven years, but must keep working away at it, giving the stumps a wide birth at first, but every ploughing helps to break up the roots and hasten the final clearing. All this is done with the help of oxen better than with that of horses.

In the early part of the Spring, if the roads are at all passable, our friends indulge themselves in a day or two's fishing. At this season of the year the streams communicating with the lakes are literally alive with mullet and suckers.

"Each creek and bay with fry enumerable swarm."

In their efforts to ascend the rivers the fish huddle one another so thick that they may be lifted out by the bushel. The usual practice is to troll with a bunch of large hooks tied together, some of which are sure to *stick* when the short stout line, attached to the end of a pole, is pulled through the crowd. If the first rush, which only lasts a day or two, is over, the sportsman has recourse to the spear. This is not such a wholesale process, but the sport is, if anything, better.

The young Gates's, with two or three others, having decided upon a day's recreation, set out with the light waggon early in the



morning, taking care to be provided with all necessary apparatus and conveniences—a lot of dry cedar bark for torches, trolling lines, spears and spear-poles, bags to hold the fish, &c. After a long ride through the mud, and over the “corduroy,” they arrive at a tavern convenient to the place where they expect to commence operations. Here they put up their tired horses for the night, and refresh themselves with supper. Meeting with others on the same errand, they learn that their sport will have to be with the spear, as the first rush of the fish is over. This is a little discouraging, nevertheless they prepare to make the best use of the time at their disposal. The creek they propose to try is only a short distance from the tavern, and is well adapted for night sport, as the banks are low and free from shrubs. The bottom is muddy, and there are plenty of pools, not too deep, where it will be easy to drive the fish with the glare of the torches. At first the boys make a good many misses from want of practice, but they soon get into the right fling, and seldom fail to strike their game. It is glorious fun all though the moonlight night, under the sheltering dwarf beeches, overhung with the ‘gadding vine.’ At length, tired out with their sport, and having as many fish as each can conveniently carry, they wend their way back to the tavern, and after breakfast, and an hour or two’s rest, prepare for the journey homeward, time being too precious at this season to admit of another day’s sport.

There is another kind of sport at this time of the year, not so seasonable or lawful, but often more profitable than fishing. The game laws of Canada wisely prohibit the killing of deer at certain seasons, but nobody ever thought of their being enforced at Corning’s mills, where almost every settler used to have his rifle and a “salt log” in the rear of his lot, and did not scruple at a shot whether in season or not, least of all in the Spring of the year, when it could be got so handy. Taking advantage of the natural craving for salt, which the deer in common with cattle, sheep and horses, have at this season especially, they select a quiet spot in the bush, in the rear of their lot, where finding the trunk of a tree which has lain a year or two, they bore a few holes in it with a large auger, and fill them with salt. In a short time the deer find it out, and visit it regularly. A point is then chosen, about a hundred yards from the log, where a screen of brush is put up, behind this the hunter sits with his rifle at full cock, ready to blaze away when a chance offers. A path, ascending towards the screen if possible, has to be kept clear of leaves, and the utmost precaution observed in approaching, as the least flutter or scent will be

telegraphed to the log, in which case the hunter may as well turn back. The best time to go is just before daylight in the morning, with the wind from the log, when, if the game is there, one can hardly miss. It is best to aim at the shoulder, and even then I have known them to run a long way before they dropt.

But to return to our Spring work. During the two days the boys were absent on their fishing excursion, Pap has been busy fixing up the fences, blown down since last fall. The common "worm"-fence in use all over this country, and in the United States, on timbered lands, consists of "rails" laid zigzag at an angle of about  $25^{\circ}$ , the ends resting alternately on one another. The rails are about ten feet in length, and made of cedar, if it can be had, for it splits easily, and being of a rosinous nature, will last almost a lifetime. It is a very light wood however, and requires bracing at the corners, which is sometimes done by an upright stake on each side, capped on the top with a cross-piece, having a hole at each end for the top of the stakes to enter. A fence of this description will stand a pretty severe storm, but it is the fewest number that go to so much trouble, being content with a rail prop, consisting of two rails, one on each side the fence, and crossing each other at the corners, so as to form a "crotch," into which a heavy top rail is put. In the absence of cedar, the next best is elm, which makes a strong substantial fence, and needs little propping. It is usual to pick out the logs, from which the rails are split, when the trees are being chopped in the fallow. The splitting is done with wedges, and a heavy wooden mallet shod with iron. The Gates's, with ten acres of a fallow to fence in this Spring, will have lots of it to do; the logs are lying ready, cut into proper lengths, but they won't be touched until after the fallow is logged and burned, as it would take too much time and labour to remove them from the heaps of brush and other timber. They may be a little scorched with the first brush fire, but this will do them very little harm.

Having cross-ploughed all the land fit for working, they turn their attention to the stumping of the ten-acre field already referred to. It has been in grass ever since the first crop of wheat, not pasture, but real meadow, and has produced some splendid crops of timothy, all from the first seed. Beginning to run out however, they have determined to break up the field and have it ready for fall wheat. The roots have never been stirred by the plough, and consequently will be less decayed, and firmer in the ground,

than if the field had been cropped a few times. There are stumping machines in use that will take out a stump, as easily as a dentist pulls a tooth, but the one best known in the back townships is the ox team and logging chain, applied to a great number of other useful purposes. Having ascertained, by a kick with the foot, that a stump is likely to move, the chain, which has a hook at the end of it, is hitched round the head, the oxen with the other end of the chain attached to the neck yoke, are put to the "jump," and if the first jerk does not bring the stump, they try another. But both the spade and the axe have to be used sometimes, digging round the larger roots and cutting them. Thus they go from stump to stump, omitting the hemlocks, if there are any, as no ox power can hope to stir them yet. It is now a fine job for the little ones, if the settler is blessed with a lot of them, to gather up the roots and fragments, and pile them round the stumps. It is still better fun to attend to the burning, when the whole has dried sufficiently; they may have some hundreds of small bonfires going at the same time. And now, after the fire has cleared away a good part of the rubbish, but not quite all the stumps yet, the plough enters and breaks up the sod, turning up a great many more roots; these are again piled round the remaining stumps, left a few days to dry, then, more bonfires.

By the time Pap has got through with his stumping and ploughing of this field, the other fields, also ploughed in the meantime, are ready for the seed. All hands are therefore busy sowing and harrowing. This, the most important work of the season over, they are ready to go into the logging of the large fallow chopped last winter. It is the heaviest job they have on hand, but must be got through with in time for turnips and potatoes. As a preparatory step, the brush has to be burned. It is now dry enough; on the first favourable wind, therefore, fires are lighted in different parts of the field; in a few hours the flames have licked up every vestige of brush, and a great many of the smaller limbs. A good burn is of the first importance, as the work of logging is thereby much easier. It would take several weeks for the Gates's to do all the logging of their fallow without assistance, and this would throw them too far behind for a crop of turnips and potatoes; so Pap has determined on having a "bee." Gust has been round the neighbours and given the warning. They expect from twenty to thirty men, and five or six ox teams. If they all work heartily they will do up the best part of the ten acres in a day. At home, the girls have been busy for two or three days preparing for the occasion.



Sugar is plentiful, and one of the boys has managed to kill a good fat buck at the salt log; it is a little out of season, but with an abundance of well preserved bacon and home-smoked ham, they will be able to set out a pretty respectable table.

Logging, which is, perhaps, the hardest work in the clearing up of wild land, consists in piling the fallen timber in convenient heaps for burning. The trees have been previously cut into logs of from ten to fifteen feet in length. This was done partly in winter at the time of the chopping, and partly after the burning of the brush a few days ago. The very large logs, elms perhaps, being inconvenient to move are made the commencement of the heaps; the smaller ones, in the immediate neighbourhood, are hauled up close to them—one man with a yoke of oxen and chain which is hitched round the end of the log does this part of the work; four others, two at each end, with handspikes pile the logs on top of one another. This is what tries a man's mettle, and the young and foolish often hurt themselves in showing off their strength and dexterity.

The loggers have formed themselves into gangs in different parts of the field, leaving room for each other to work. All sorts of fun, chafing and racing with one another go on, until noon, when the horn is blown for dinner, Mary Ann giving it a few of her best flourishes, or a stave or two of a camp-meeting tune. She is the best hand at the long horn all round this part of the country, is Mary Ann, and when the men are praising her pumpkin-pies, her musical performance will not be forgotten.

In the afternoon, the work slackens a little, but still Pap is well pleased with what has been done; for a couple of days with the boys and his own team will finish up the whole thing. A good many have a prejudice against bees, and neither go to them (except it is a raising), nor have them themselves. They argue, with some truth, that the days they have to give in payment to each one attending the bee, are worth more to them than all the work they get done; and this may often be the case, especially where a man has no sons or other help about his place; still, the advantage of getting an important piece of work done at once may often be so great that the time given in repayment will not be grudged.

The Gates's have a good cedar-swamp on their lot, which has kept them in fences from the start, but this winter the island fallow being rich in choice good-splitting elm, a sufficient number of logs were cut and left for rails, and while the log-heaps are burning, they ply the mallets and wedges. The usual practice is to take off



four outside slices, leaving the core square, which being too wiry to split, they turn over into a log heap. Each of the four slices is further split into so many rails.

The log-heaps, after burning a day and a night, are now carefully "branded up," and any loose pieces of brush, roots or chips, are thrown on the top. This may have to be repeated more than once, especially where there are any hemlocks, but these, instead of being left to protract the burning, should, if possible, be taken to the saw mill, and turned into lumber.

And now nothing remains but the ashes. I have seen a good deal of puffing in some of our emigrant guide books about what *might* be realized from potash, but I would not advise the settler, ignorant of the business, to have anything to do with it. Let him sell his ashes for three-pence or four-pence a bushel to some "ashery man," who may be glad enough to get them, or if he cannot dispose of them in this way, the next best thing he can do is to scatter them over the fallow. The potash business is all very good if you give yourself to it, but it "don't pay" along with clearing up and cultivating a farm.

Pap takes the easiest way of getting rid of his ashes, that is, scatters them over the fallow. This and the fencing of the field completed, he is ready, after the first rain, to sow the whole with turnips and potatoes, which will keep the weeds out till Fall, and then, if the crops are got off in time, the land will be none the worse for winter wheat. Very little time will suffice for getting the potatoes in. The loamy soil, soft as wool, where the roots are not too near the surface receives a few seedings here and there, which are "hilled" up with the hoe. A child of ten years of age may do the whole thing.

It is now on in June, the fall wheat is well advanced; the spring has a good braird. Pap has been giving his mornings and evenings to the garden. The cabbage-plants, raised from the seed in an artificial bed, protected from the flies by a screen, are doing first-rate, so are the onions. Pap has tried to raise an orchard, but has not yet succeeded; his neighbours have tried it with no better success; from some cause or other apple trees have been a failure at the "Mills," and yet, strange as it may seem, only a few miles to the east, in a much newer settlement, they have splendid orchards. Some say it is owing to the proximity of extensive swamps affecting the mean temperature. Pap himself blames the fruit-tree pedlars for passing off old stock, and the fruit-tree pedlars blame Pap with carelessness in planting. But Pap can raise

any quantity of Siberian crabs, and his "old woman" knows how to preserve them,

Where the clearing is well advanced, there is now a lull in the labours of the farm. Of course one can always find plenty to do, but he will not be driven so hard. Now is the best time to stump and clean up fields that may have been several years in meadow; to build barns, stables and root-houses. Indoors, the women are busy with their wool. Before shearing, the sheep are washed in a creek or pond, and when dry, some neighbour, accustomed to the shears, is hired to do the clipping. The wool is then taken home and picked, preparatory to being sent to the carding mill. Sometimes it is in a dreadful state with burrs, of which there are three or four kinds growing on the roadsides, and in the fence corners, where the poor sheep have often to hunt for a scanty living. But Mrs. Gates is going to have a picking bee; all the old gossips will be invited; the tea will be made pretty strong, and 'ginger will be hot in the mouth.' Mary Ann will also have some of her young friends call in the evening, the boys, by mere accident, may happen to drop in too, after the old people go away. I would not say, but there might be dancing, if old Telfer's fiddle can be had.

The wool, picked and sorted, goes to the carding mill, and comes back in rolls ready for the spinner, who uses the large wheel driven with the hand. This is now Mary Ann's duty, since her mother has begun to get up in years, but there won't be much done till after harvest.

With summer comes another opportunity for travelling. Sleigh-riding not being so attractive to the old people now, as in former years, this is their chance. The roads are good, and the days long. They have a few old friends and relations whom they like to visit occasionally, and the old lady has saved two tubs of butter without a taint of forest-weeds, such as "leeks" or "adder tongue," also a box of fresh eggs, packed in oats, the sale of which in the market, or by the way, will pay expenses, and procure a few articles of dress and finery for herself and the girls. They will take the "old span" and the new light spring waggon, and be back in eight or ten days.

Summer will be somewhat different with the settler just commencing, and having everything to do himself. He will have got his small first year's clearing ploughed in a sort of a way, and sown with Spring wheat; and he may have managed to log and clean up as much of his winter's chopping as will do for potatoes and turnips; but the rest of the fallow has now to be attended to

for Fall wheat, which with some building he may have on hand, will keep him at home with his hands full. Or perhaps he may have a well to dig, which will be labour well spent, if he has no spring on his lot, and has to drive his cattle to the creek twice a day, or team the water home in barrels. In this case, the exact spot on which to commence operations, will be a question of some importance. If, like most of his neighbours, he has faith in the "witching stick," the difficulty will be referred to its subtile and mysterious power. A small twig with two stems branching out so as to form a crotch, held in a peculiar way with both hands of the operator, who must be a believer; this is the witching stick. It is carried up and down the place where it would be convenient for the water to be, and if water is there the end of the stick not held by the hands, will bend downwards and mark the spot. I never saw any harm in following its indications, for water is just as likely to be found where it says it is as anywhere else. A great deal has been said for and against the witching stick. The argument in favour is, that some men possess the faculty of indicating subterranean springs and currents, by sensation, the thing being called *Bletonism* after the Frenchman Bleta, who had such a faculty. Electricity is the secret of the whole thing, and this is said to explain how it is that only a few are capable of operating with the stick, namely those positively or negatively charged with the fluid. Where there is an equilibrium in the system of the operator, the witching stick will give no sign. I never could get the stick to do anything for me, but have often seen it bent and bending in the hands of others; whether by electricity or *pressure of the stems of the crotch by the operator*, who is generally excited at the time, I have not been able to decide.

In most instances, well digging is not a very difficult matter, and much of it the settler can do himself. If there is rock in the way, of course it will be better to engage the services of a regular well-digger at so much a foot.

It is now the leafy month of July; long and beautiful are the days, the nights, still and breathless, sometimes cool, or with a warm smoky haze. Myriads of fire-flies dance in the shade of trees. Dreamlike and indistinct in the yellow moonlight are all things blended together—sight and sound. Far off and nigh, the heavy clang of the cow-bell, the drowsy tinklings of the roadside sheepfold, the flute-like, melancholy ever receding song of the Whip-poor-will, and the ear-piercing shriek of the Night-hawk, swooping downwards to the earth. These are the voices of the



night. How different will their interpretations be! Sitting alone on a rail fence it may be, the immigrant is oppressed with the foreignness of feeling, sight and sound. He remembers, "moons like these," but lighting other and better loved scenes, hill and strath, that echoed the "Corn Craiks's" unwearied song.

"O why left I my hame,  
&c., &c."

I know it is no joke, the first year or two, but it wont do to get spooney, the pill has to be swallowed; not forgetting the dear old land, but learning more and more to love the new.

At length Pap and the old woman have returned from their tour of business and pleasure, the latter full of news, and the fashions, and just in time to have the girls put in shape for the "twelfth." Orangeism has taken quite a hold in Canada, nor is the organization confined to Irishmen, as might be supposed, but includes both Scotch and English. Some have the notion that it is necessary to the stability of the country, and the maintenance of the Protestant faith. The twelfth of July is the great anniversary, which is celebrated by a meeting of the lodges situate within certain limits, and a "walk" with drum and fife, to the tune of the "Protestant boys." They generally have a sermon, and wind up with a supper and ball. I recollect hearing a Scotchman at one of their public gatherings holding forth rather wildly on the claims of the Institution upon his countrymen. "Have Scotchmen to be reminded of the glorious Revolution of 1688, when William the Protestant, and hero of immortal memory, ascended the throne of the Popish persecutor, when the long banished son returned to his mother's embrace, the exile to the home and friends of his youth, when &c., &c." The audience thought it very eloquent, but failed to see the connection of the subject with the Orange Institution.

Of late years Fenianism has helped to strengthen the body; new lodges have been formed, and old ones have added to their numbers; but the mere monotony of the thing kills out in time a good many of the country lodges. For a while, at first, getting up a lodge room, with the paraphernalia of flags, and other insignia, great zeal is displayed; but when all the available people are "made," it becomes a question, what next? This of course has reference to the back townships; in the towns and cities among able and intelligent men, it may be very different.

But fifteen acres of meadow, more or less, invite our friends to



other work than celebrating anniversaries of old battles. The day after the "walk" therefore finds them busy with the scythe and rake. A good week's work is before them. It might take longer, but the warm wind and the hot sun will do the curing part in little or no time. In the morning it may be green and wet with dew, in the evening it is withered, perhaps in the barn.

It is that variety of grass called "Timothy" which is most in use and found to answer best in this climate. It is said to derive its name from a Mr. Timothy Hansa, who first introduced it to the State of North Carolina. In the year 1763, it was brought to England, where it is known by the name of catstail or herd's grass. It is perennial, having numerous leaves on the stem, which rises from three to four or even five feet, with a cylindrical flour-head or panicle three or four inches in length. Although coarse in appearance, animals are very fond of it, either green or in hay. The seed is a very small globe, of a silvery grey lustre when good and fresh, differing from all other grass seeds in its weight, which is 44 lbs. to the bushel. It is a very important crop in Canada, and the farmer who has plenty of it need not be afraid of a long winter.

Barley comes next, of which the Gates's, this year, have something like ten acres. The neighbours laughed at Pap for having so much of it, but it was one of the luckiest speculations in the way of a crop he had ever made. He had over three hundred bushels, and sold it all at an average of one dollar and twenty-five cents per bushel, more than double the price of former years. Canada barley is now in extraordinary demand on the other side of the line, for malting purposes, for which, owing to the weight and beautiful colour of the grain, it is much better adapted than any the Americans themselves have yet been able to raise; so that notwithstanding an import duty of fifteen cents per bushel, they are ready to take all we can give them, and their demands are not likely to fall off while they continue, as they are doing, to become more and more a beer-drinking, instead of a whiskey-drinking people.

The ten acres of barley no sooner cut and in the barn, than it is time to turn into the fall wheat, of which they have also ten acres, this being considered a more than ordinary breadth for a backward place like Corning's Mills, where the main dependence had always been in the later Spring crops, some settlers having seldom or never tried the other variety, from the risk, which in one way or another attends it. The principal crop in all new settlements

## THE BACKWOODS' LIFE.

is spring wheat, which is often sown as late as the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, and is usually ready for harvesting about the first of two in September. The Gates's have close upon 35 acres of crop. Sown, as the ground was ready, through nearly all of the month of May, harvesting does not come upon us all at once, but still the work is pretty hard, whether sowing the cradle all day, or raking up and binding after those that the boys prefer the former, as being more consequential. A hired man or two, attends to the latter. At length the wheat is cut; a few days in the stook, and it is hauled into the mow, where it remains till the threshing machine comes round in the Fall, when we arrive at the point at which we pick up our friend, the Paisley weaver—and so, complete the Backwoods' Life.

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